PLANTING IDEAS • BEAUTIFUL GARDENS • EXPERT ADVICE

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

SEPTEMBER 2013

LATE SUMMER SPLENDOUR

How to keep your borders looking gorgeous for longer

INSIDER'S GUIDE

Prettiest passion flowers · Creating privacy in your garden
Must-see gardens of Paris · Best salvia selection

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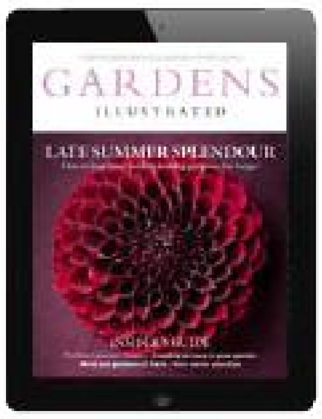
editor's letter

There's something about late-summer light that highlights the richness of colour – or lack of it – in the garden. Tawny grasses and seedheads look wonderful offset by rich reds and purples, but alone can veer into drabness. To make sure your garden sparkles for as long as possible, it's worth seeking out plants that are hardworking enough to continue performing until late summer, or come into their own at this time of year. I find the jewel-like colours of dahlias irresistible and you'll discover a particularly fine collection in the garden of Nel and Theej Verheggen in the Netherlands. To find out what the experts are growing, I asked Mark Straver of Hortus Loci – the wholesale nursery of choice for many leading garden designers – for his late-summer favourites. Salvias are renowned for keeping the garden going from early summer until the first frost, and with so many different cultivars to choose from what better place to seek inspiration than Great Comp in Kent? The gardens are a plantsman's paradise and alongside one of the country's finest selections of salvias, there are also many beautiful and rare shrubs, perennials and exotics. If you fancy being inspired by gardens further afield, look out for our three-part series on weekends away for gardeners; beginning this month with Paris. Next October, writer John Hoyland and I will be leading a tour to the gardens of Paris, details of which will be published early next year. I hope you enjoy the issue.

Juliet



GARDENS ILLUSTRATED is available as a digital edition – search 'GARDENS ILLUSTRATED' on the App Store, Google Play or Zinio.com

A tour around the gardens of Paris on page 77.

Nel and Theej Verheggen's spectacular dahlia garden, on page 68.

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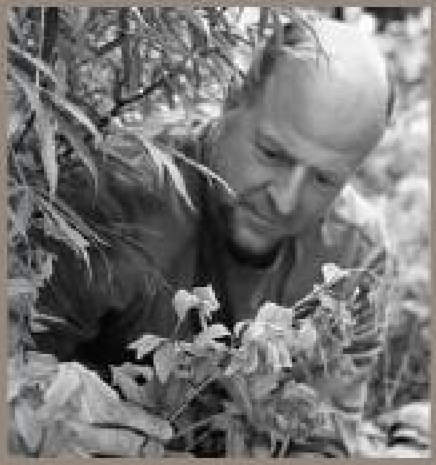

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SIBYLLE PIETREK, SHUTTERSTOCK

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Free
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when you subscribe to
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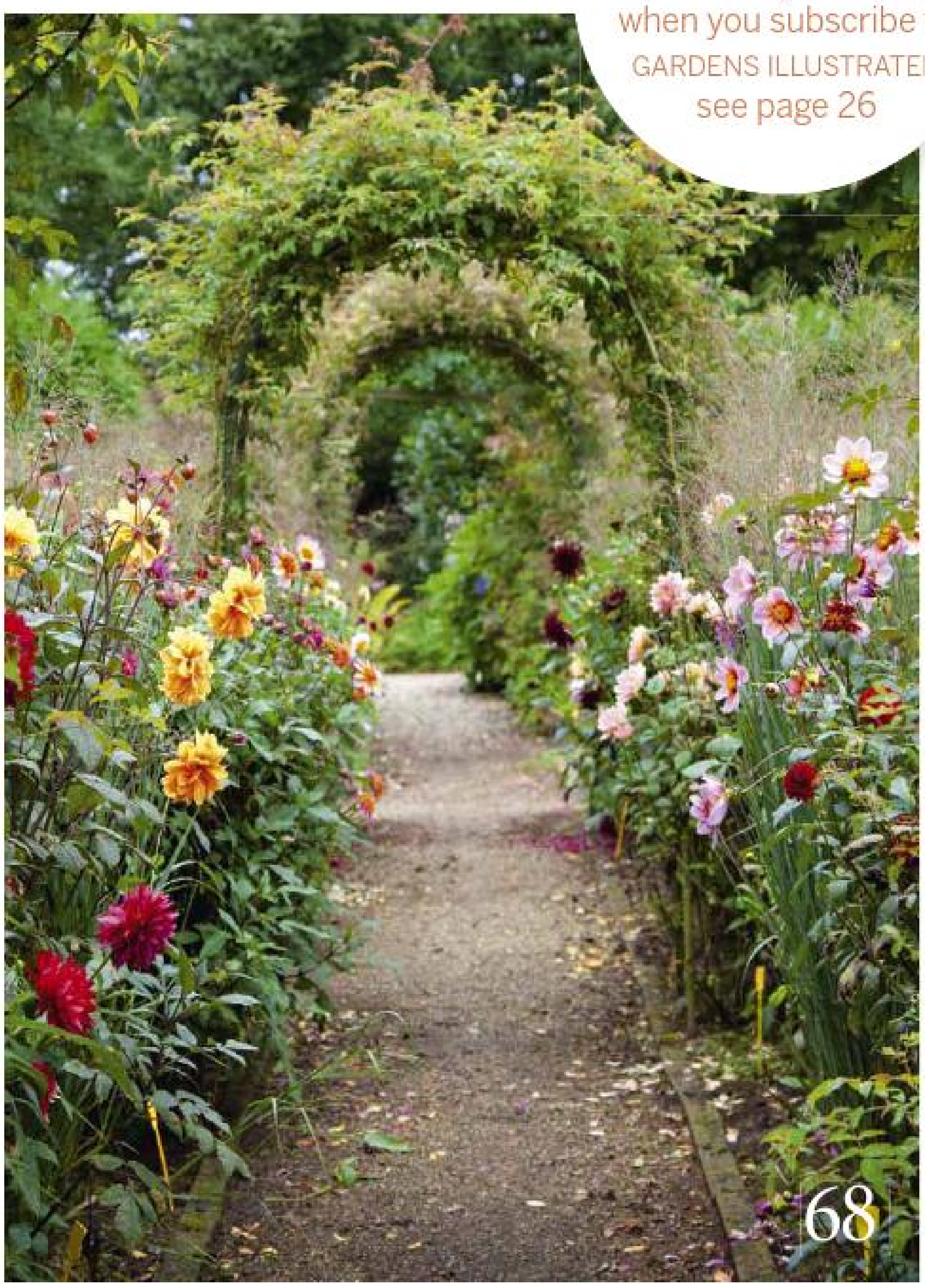
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READER OFFERS

- **Free 30-day trial** when you subscribe to the digital edition of GARDENS ILLUSTRATED – see page 26
- Our reviewed books are offered at a special price, plus there's free p&p – see page 99
- Readers can receive a **10% discount** on Sarah Raven's autumn catalogue – see page 12

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USA/CANADA GARDENS ILLUSTRATED, PO Box 669, Selmer, TN 38375 USA.

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✉ GARDENS ILLUSTRATED, Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited,
Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN.

SYNDICATION & LICENSING

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED is available for licensing and syndication.

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THIS MAGAZINE IS OWNED AND PUBLISHED BY IMMEDIATE MEDIA COMPANY BRISTOL

Standard subscription rates: UK £49.20 per annum; Eire and Europe £49.97; rest of the world £59.97. Distribution Frontline, Peterborough. US distribution Source IPD/Speedimpex. Email intlquery@seymour.co.uk Printed in the UK by William Gibbons Ltd. GARDENS ILLUSTRATED (ISSN 0968-8920) (USPS 015-608) August 2013 is published monthly by Immediate Media Company Bristol, 9th Floor, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN, UK. Distributed in the US by Circulation Specialists, Inc., 2 Corporate Drive, Suite 945, Shelton CT 06484-6238. Periodicals postage paid at Seneca, SC and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to GARDENS ILLUSTRATED, PO Box 669, Selmer, TN 38375-0669. Unsolicited manuscripts, artwork or transparencies are accepted on the understanding that the publishers incur no liability for their storage or return. The contents of this magazine are fully protected by copyright and may not be reproduced without permission. The GARDENS ILLUSTRATED cover is printed on 250gsm Respecta Gloss produced in Belgium by Burgo; the china clay filler is supplied from the UK. The Immediate Media Company Limited is working to ensure that all of its paper is sourced from well-managed forests. This magazine can be recycled for use in newspapers and packaging. Please remove any gifts, samples or wrapping and dispose of it at your local collection point. All prices are correct at time of going to press. © Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited 2013. Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulation. ISSN 0968-8920

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ABC Jan-Jun 2013 36,221

contributors

SIBYLLE PIETREK

Sibylle is a photographer whose images of gardens in her native Germany regularly feature in magazines around the world. For GARDENS ILLUSTRATED she ventured to the Netherlands to shoot Nel and Theej Verheggen's dahlia-filled garden on page 68.

"Dahlias are among my favorite flowers. I could get lost in shooting all their beautiful colours and wonderful shapes."

KIERAN BRADSHAW

NOËL KINGSBURY

Noël is a designer and writer, whose garden on the Welsh borders reflects his passion for wild-style planting, as well as acting as a laboratory for his studies in plant combinations. On page 58 he visits Dove Cottage, a nursery hidden amid the hills of West Yorkshire.

"Dove Cottage is one of those gardens that is both inspiring and has quite a lot to teach us about how to grow plants well."

CHARLIE HOPKINSON

MARK STRAVER

Mark is a third-generation nurseryman who co-founded Hortus Loci in 2011. Not only does Mark have plants in his blood, he's also an expert salmon fisherman and has now turned his hand to writing with his roundup of late-summer stars on page 48.

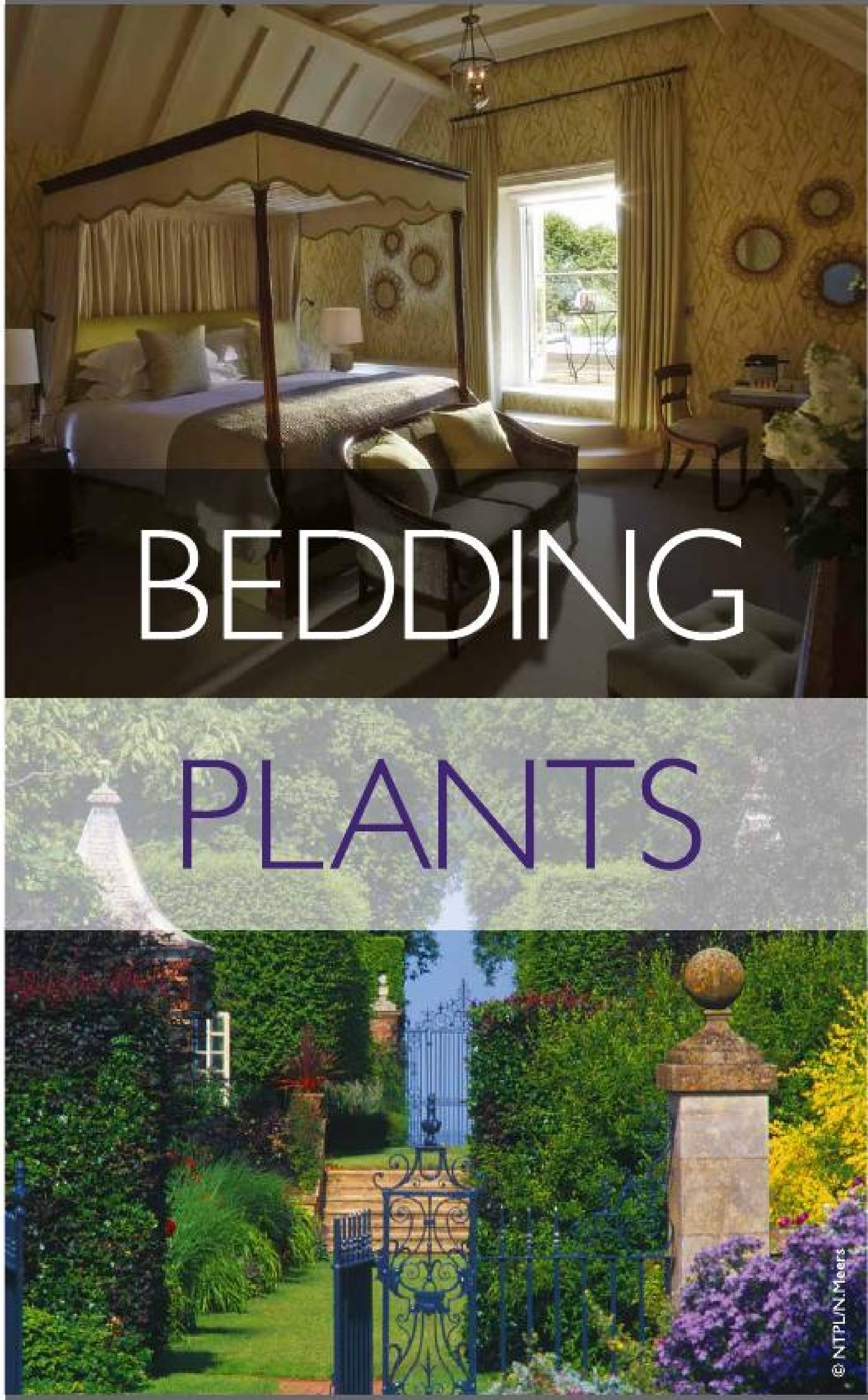
"It was a challenge to narrow down my selection to 16. Even if you choose just one, indulge it a little and reap the rewards."

ANGELA HARDING

Angela uses a combination of block printing and silkscreen to produce her distinctive illustrations. Her work regularly features in both GARDENS ILLUSTRATED and *Countryfile*, as well as on greetings cards. You can see her illustration for this month on page 114.

"It is always a great joy to receive the brief for my monthly illustration and see were it will lead me!"

The beautifully-refurbished Dormy House Hotel is now THE place to stay in the Cotswolds, with 40 individual rooms and suites that will become your home from home.



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News, Gardening talent, Nurseryman's favourites, Gardener's notes & Shopping

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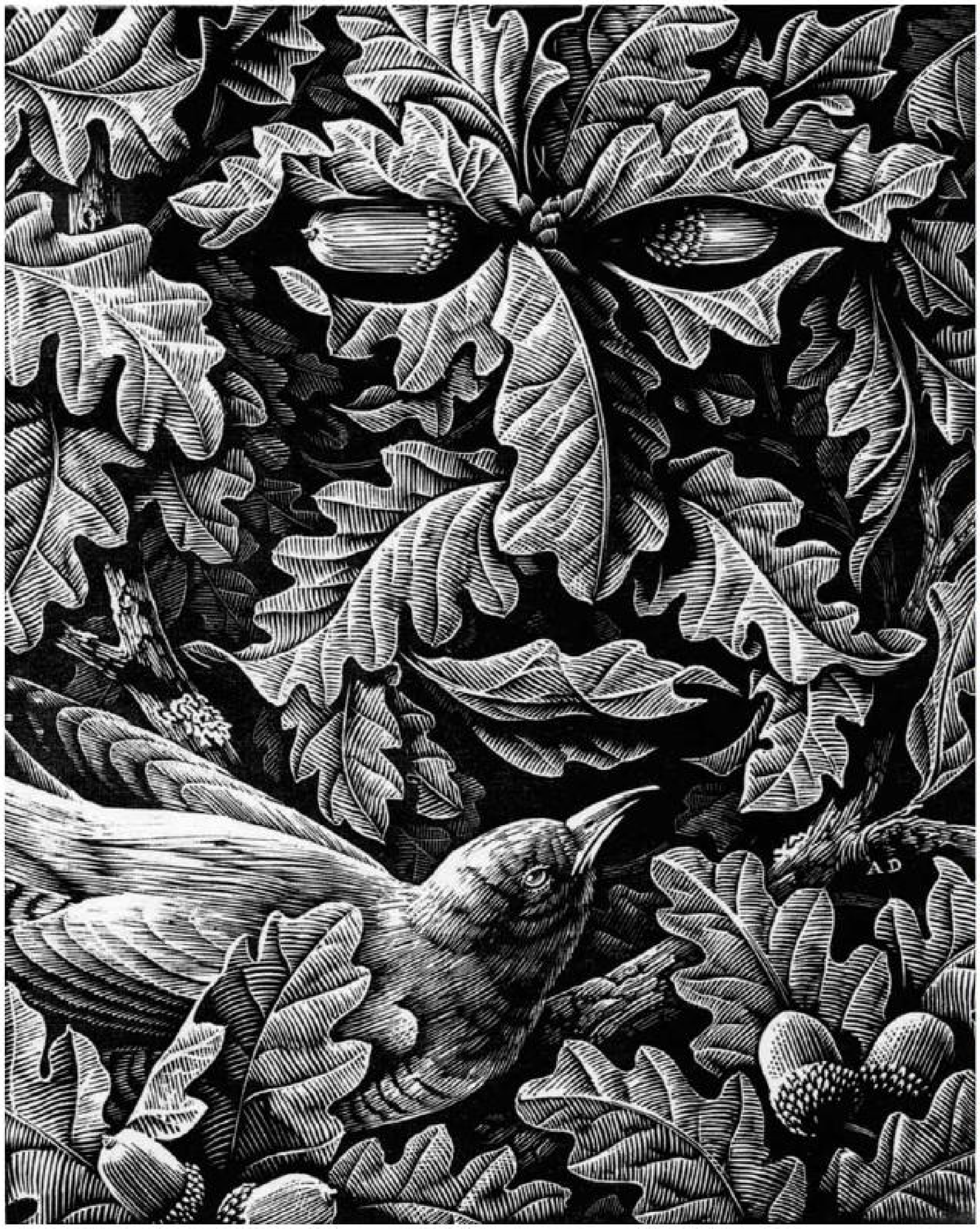

Royal Oak By Andrew Davidson for

EXHIBITION

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Images of rural life, wildlife and landscape infuse the work of artist, printmaker and designer Andrew Davidson (pictured left outside his studio in Gloucestershire). Working on English boxwood to create engravings in intricate detail, Andrew's designs, for prints, fabrics and wallpapers are full of atmosphere and strong graphic appeal. They have been used for packaging, Royal Mail postage stamps and even the glass doors at Wimbledon's Centre Court. You can see – and buy – a selection of Andrew's work at homeware and design shop Tinsmiths' Autumn Exhibition, 14 September – 12 October.

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Gardening Against the Odds awards honour unsung heroes who bring joy to others.

UNIQUE HOME STAYS

AWARDS

Gardening challenge

Entries are being invited for the annual Gardening Against the Odds awards. These celebrate the restorative benefits of creating or tending a garden for those who face physical or mental illness, or who simply battle for resources. Closing date for entries 30 September. Full details at www.telegraph.co.uk/gardeningawards

GARDEN NOTEBOOK

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Plight of the bee

In documentary film *More Than Honey*, Swiss film director Markus Imhoof travels the world to meet those whose livelihoods depend on bees and documents their stories with observations on the plight currently facing these essential insects. He visits almond growers in California, bee researchers in Australia and a pollen dealer in China. To find details about screenings follow the Twitter page @morethanhoneyuk or see www.morethanhoney.co.uk

Narrated by John Hurt
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Diary

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- **RHS Wisley Flower Show**

Expert exhibitors including specialist nurseries along with floral displays and the National Dahlia Society show. 4-8 September, 9am-6pm (5pm on Sunday). Free with normal garden entry. RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB. Tel 0845 260 9000, www.rhs.org.uk

- **Longstock Plant and Gift Fair**

Part of the Leckford Estate owned by Waitrose, Longstock Park Nursery hosts a plant fair including Chelsea Flower Show gold medal-winning nurseries Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants, Avon Bulbs and Pennards. 8 September, 10am-4pm, £5. Longstock Park Nursery, Longstock, Stockbridge, Hampshire SO20 6EH. Tel 01264 810894, www.longstocknursery.co.uk

- **Choosing Garden Trees**

A look at which trees are suitable for gardens and how to care for them. 14 September, 10am-1pm, £30. Cambridge University Botanic Garden, 1 Brookside, Cambridge CB2 1JE. Tel 01223 331875, www.botanic.cam.ac.uk

- **The Plant School Plant Course**

Held one day a month through the academic year over a total of ten days, this course gives a good grounding in all aspects of plant knowledge with lectures and visits. Term starts 18 September, £1,300. Other courses also available. Based at The Garden Museum, Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1 7LB. Tel 01327 861150, www.theplantschool.org

- **Abundance Garden Trail**

Discover this series of site-specific newly commissioned contemporary artworks by eight artists set within gardens as part of Somerset Art Weeks Festival and in partnership with National Gardens Scheme. 21 September – 6 October. www.somersetartworks.org.uk/abundance

- **Wakehurst Seed Festival**

Seeds available from allotment groups and specialist growers or bring your own home-grown seed to swap. Plus talks demonstrations and tours of Kew's Millennium Seed Bank housed at Wakehurst. 28 September, 11am-5pm. Wakehurst Place, Ardingly, nr Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 6TN. Tel 01444 894066, www.kew.org/visit-wakehurst

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READER EVENT
5-6 OCTOBER

Browse hundreds of plants and sample fresh produce from the Great Dixter gardens at the October Plant Fair.

Great Dixter Plant Fair

The iconic gardens at Great Dixter play host to a unique plant fair with specialist nurseries from Europe and the UK

October is the perfect time of year to establish new plants in your garden. The Great Dixter Plant Fair gathers together a carefully selected group of 20 expert growers and plantsmen from Europe and the UK to offer visitors a selection of rare and exciting perennials, shrubs and trees. It's also a great chance to see the gardens in their late-season glory. Plant Fair highlights include:

- The **Beth Chatto Garden Nursery** makes its first appearance (Beth Chatto is Patron of the Great Dixter Charitable Trust).
- Two Swedish nurserymen: **Jonas Bengtsson**, who plant hunts in the Far East, will have some delectable plants, and **Gerben Tjeerdsma**, who is bringing a fine selection of bulbs.
- From the Netherlands there is **Coen Jansen**, one of the great plantsmen of our time.
- Another Dutch nursery **Tuingold Foltz**, new to the Fair, will display some of its choicest late-summer perennials.
- From the UK, **Neil Lucas of Knoll Gardens** will be offering grasses and **Jon Wheatley from the National Collection of Dahlias** will offer a tempting array of his plants.
- **PLUS** other nurseries and a programme of talks from the nurserymen held at half-hourly intervals throughout the weekend.

WHERE
Great Dixter, Northiam, Rye,
East Sussex TN31 6PH
DATE
5-6 October
TIME
11am-4pm
COST
£7.50 inc entry to garden
CONTACT
Tel 01797 254048
www.greatdixter.co.uk

Ten per cent of profits will go to towards the Christopher Lloyd Travel Bursary. The bursary is open to applicants between 18-35 years of age, or who are in their first five years of a career in horticulture. It gives candidates the opportunity to travel, see plants and places and gain work experience within the world of horticulture.

Nell Jones

Having come to the Chelsea Physic Garden as a trainee, Nell Jones is now propagation manager, responsible for raising thousands of plants every year

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Earliest gardening memory Sowing broad beans with my dad – his attempt to get me to like eating them. I still hate broad beans!

What was your previous career? I worked in recruitment for the best part of 20 years but while taking a sabbatical I starting volunteering and studying horticulture to keep busy. When it came to the time to go back to work I realised I wanted those next 20 years of work to be doing something I love.

Favourite garden? One of the first gardens I visited when I started to be interested in horticulture was The Lost Gardens of Heligan and it remains one of my favourite gardens.

Three most worthwhile tips for every gardener? Observation – you need to look at your plants as often as you can. Just walking around your garden every day will build up your mental map of what looks normal and what has changed since the last time and needs closer attention; if something needs doing, do it now – procrastinate at your plants' peril...; keep a really close eye on plants in pots. You are providing their entire ecosystem – food, water, light, soil, pest predators – usually not as well as nature would.

Most valuable training My one-year traineeship at Chelsea Physic Garden. Being a small garden I did a bit of everything from mowing the lawns and designing beds to mixing sand and cement in a cement mixer.

Dream plant destination The Karoo in South Africa after the rain.

Favourite planting style Cottage garden planting style is my favourite but conversely I also love very formal gardens – green, bold shapes and crisp lines.

Biggest challenge facing gardeners today Earning a reasonable living in an industry that expects a lot in terms of qualifications and experience but doesn't reflect this in pay.

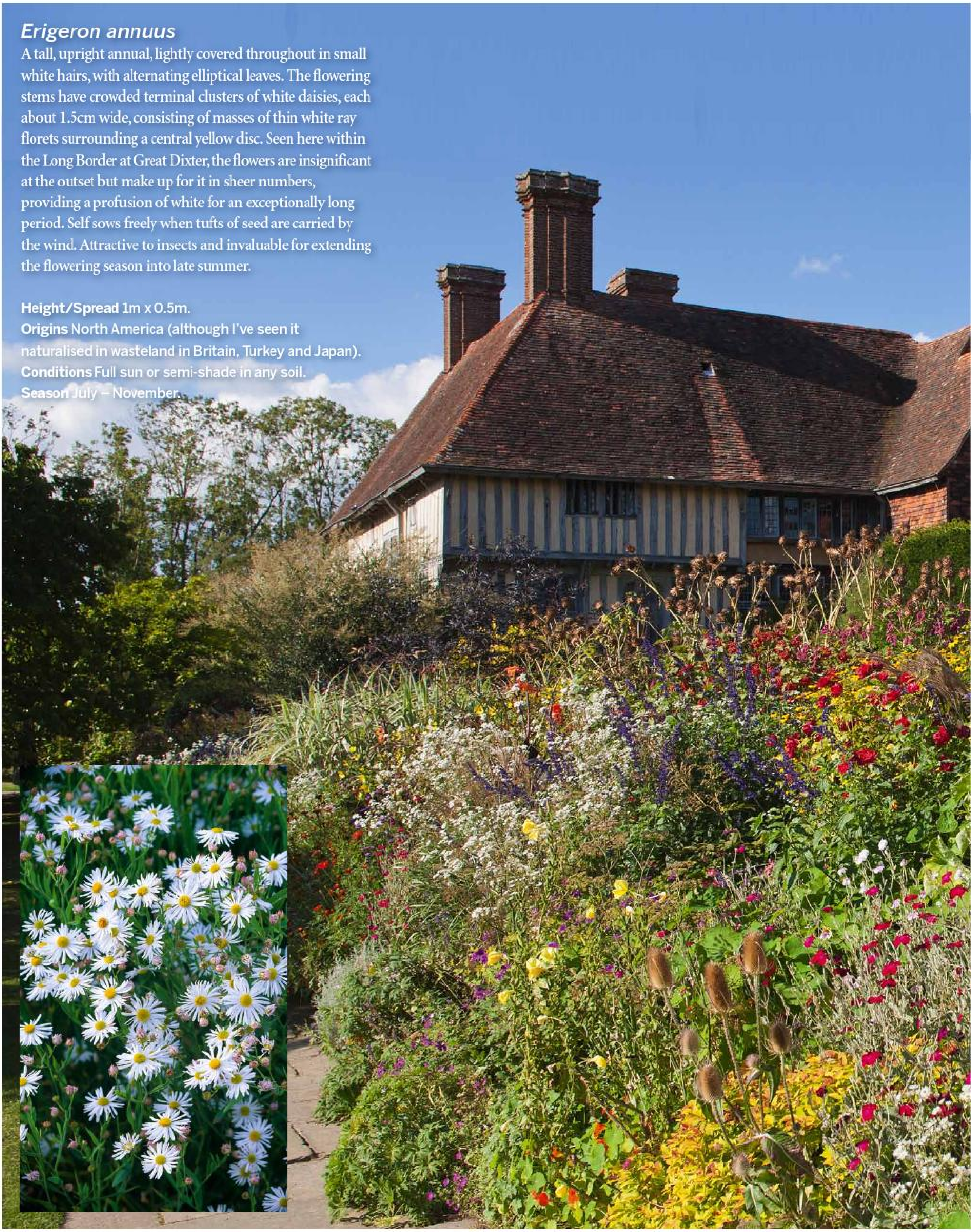
What principles have guided your attitude to horticulture Firstly, take advantage of the wealth of knowledge of other gardeners; listen to everyone but make up your own mind. Secondly, have time for other people who want to learn; afford them the generosity of knowledge that has been afforded to you. Finally, work bloody hard!

Contact email address nellie.jones99@gmail.com

Erigeron annuus

A tall, upright annual, lightly covered throughout in small white hairs, with alternating elliptical leaves. The flowering stems have crowded terminal clusters of white daisies, each about 1.5cm wide, consisting of masses of thin white ray florets surrounding a central yellow disc. Seen here within the Long Border at Great Dixter, the flowers are insignificant at the outset but make up for it in sheer numbers, providing a profusion of white for an exceptionally long period. Self sows freely when tufts of seed are carried by the wind. Attractive to insects and invaluable for extending the flowering season into late summer.

Height/Spread 1m x 0.5m.
Origins North America (although I've seen it naturalised in wasteland in Britain, Turkey and Japan).
Conditions Full sun or semi-shade in any soil.
Season July – November.



DETAIL: FRIEDRICH STRAUS / GAP PHOTOS

September plants

Extend the summer season with a host of showy stars that bring colour, stature, structure and an entourage of pollinating insects to your garden

WORDS **FERGUS GARRETT** PHOTOGRAPHS **SHARON PEARSON**

Fergus Garrett is a plantsman and head gardener at Great Dixter in East Sussex where he continues the legacy of the late, great Christopher Lloyd. Fergus also lectures, writes and serves on Royal Horticultural Society committees

Dahlia 'Emory Paul'

This is reputedly the largest-flowered dahlia with fully double lilac-pink blooms that are heavily laden with broad flat petals, twisting and curving inwards and outwards, giving a ruffled impression. Blooms are 30cm in diameter, dripping with colour, rich pink in the centre, fading on the edges and perfectly presented on stiff strong stems. Unusually for a brute this size, its leaves are not too dominant, with its flowers held well above the main body of foliage. A spellbinding Giant Decorative, with an embrace so powerfully captivating that you are left mesmerised in its presence.

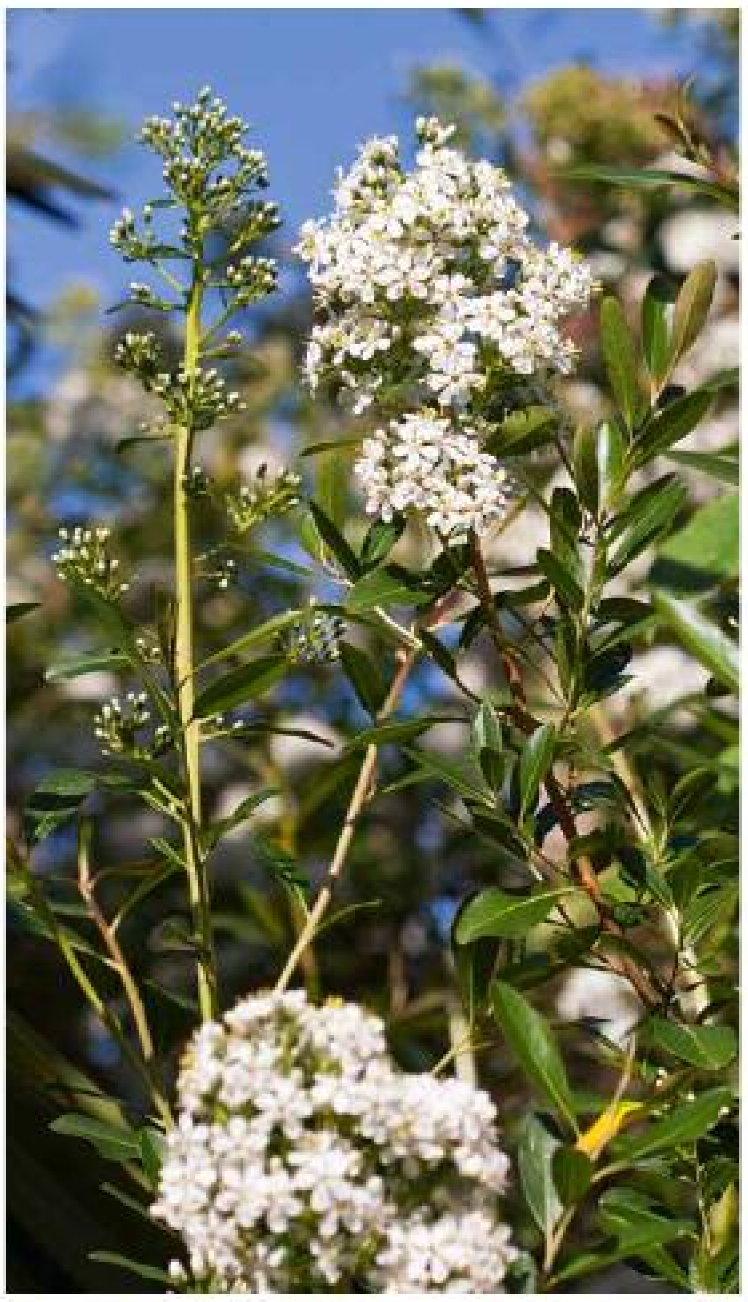
Height/Spread 2.5m x 1m.
Origins Introduced in 1962.
Conditions Moist but well-drained, fertile soil in full sun.
Season July – October.

Viburnum opulus 'Compactum'

A compact, medium-sized deciduous shrub with an upright structure crisscrossed with lateral branches. The winter skeleton is light grey before fresh green leaves emerge in spring and summer, turning purplish-pink in autumn. Flat clusters of white lacecap flowers, with an inner corymb of fertile florets surrounded by showy flat white rays, appear in June. Dense bunches of translucent red berries follow, which last well into winter. Flowers on old wood so prune selectively; young stems regenerate from ground level.

Height/Spread 2m x 2m. AGM*
Origins A form of guelder rose that is native to Europe, and north and west Asia.
Conditions Any moist, well-drained soil.
Hardiness rating RHS H4.†
Season June – January.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society
†Hardiness ratings given where available.



Escallonia bifida

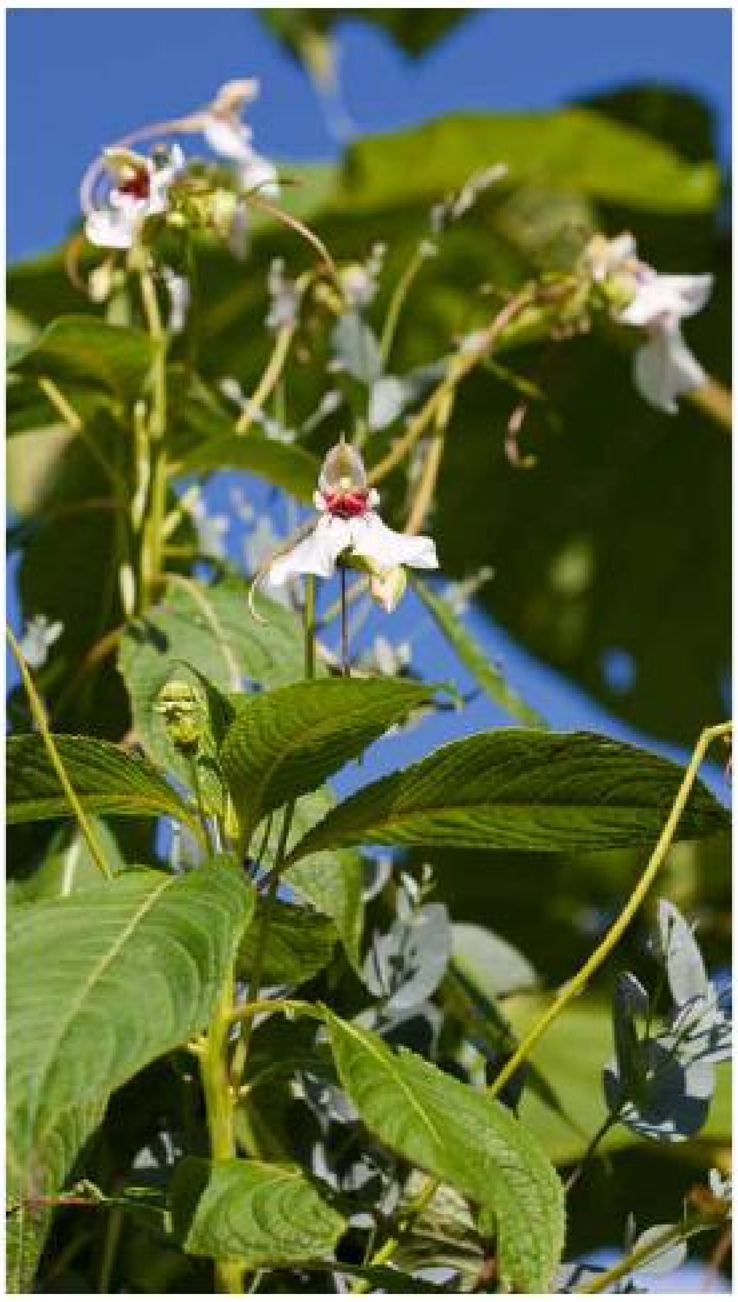
When in flower this evergreen shrub is butterfly heaven; Christo and I counted over 178 on it at one time. Forms a small tree in its native land, but in a colder climate it becomes a substantial multi-branched shrub. Flowers are small, white, gappy toothed and open centred with a large capitate stigma, carried in masses on rounded terminal panicles, turning the plant into a billowing dome of white. This is the most handsome of the escallonias with its glossy, narrow oval dark green leaves and open habit.

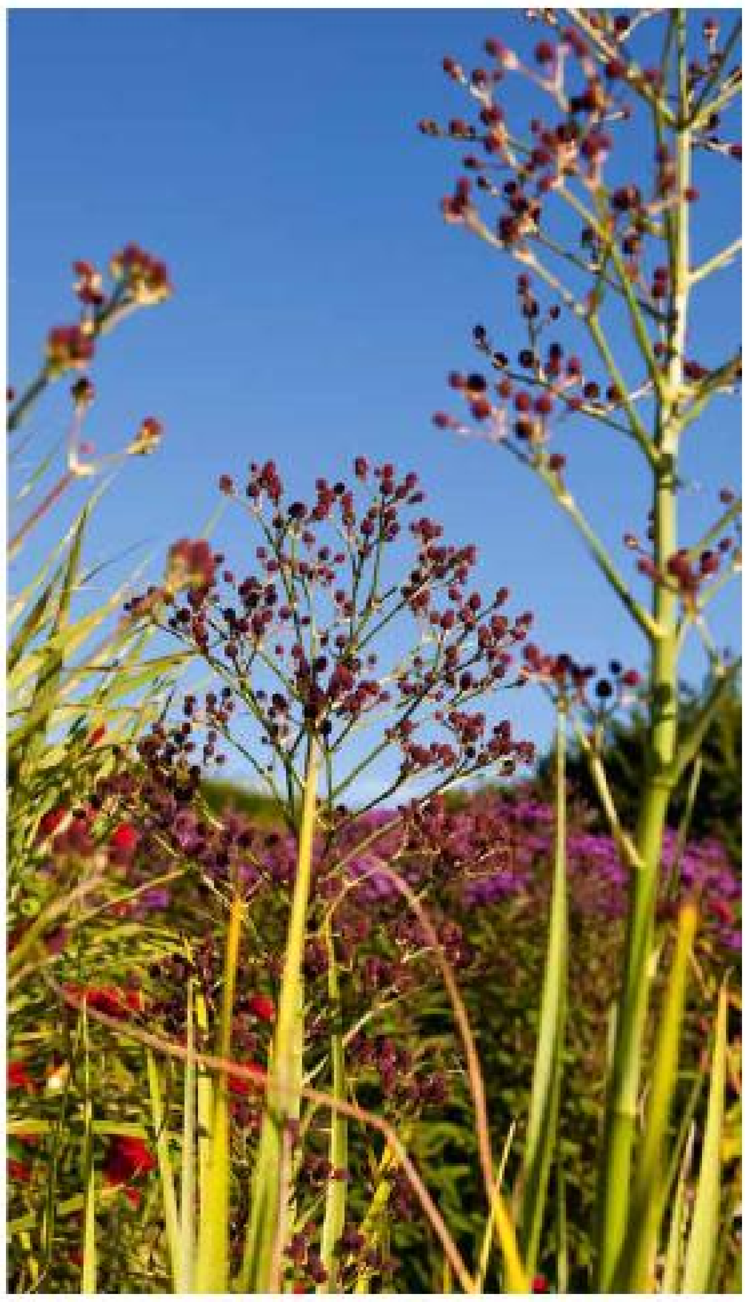
Height/Spread 4m x 5m. AGM.
Origins Eastern South America in southern Brazil and Uruguay.
Conditions Full sun, preferably slightly acidic soil in a sheltered site.
Hardiness rating RHS H4.
Season August – September.

Impatiens tinctoria

An extraordinary busy lizzie with large orchid-like flowers at the tips of succulent branches dressed with alternating shallowly serrated ovate leaves. Mature plants make large clumps, towering thick with vegetation. The exotic flowers are mesmerising, produced in loose racemes, flat-faced and facing upwards, scented white and wine red in the centre, with a broader lower lip ending in a decorative long filiform spur. Hooked seed pods follow. Thick fleshy dahlia-like tubers rest underground. Cold winters or very hot summers trigger dormancy.

Height/Spread 2.5m x 2.5m.
Origins Northeast Africa, Eastern Congo, Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda.
Conditions Full sun to part-shade in rich soil.
Hardiness rating USDA 7b-11.
Season August – October.





Eryngium pandanifolium 'Physic Purple'

This most striking of all the sea hollies has impressive arching grey green, linear, sword-shaped leaves radiating from a central clump. These are 2m long and 3cm wide, and serrated with outward-facing prickles that are uncomfortable to handle. Tall upright stems with intricate branches bear a galaxy of numerous thimble-shaped deep-purple flowers that look impressive silhouetted against the sky. Best planted where you can rub shoulders with it and observe it close up. May self-seed in the cracks of paving.

Height/Spread 3m x 2m.
Origins Marshes and wet fields of South America.
Conditions Moisture-retentive soils in sun.
Season September – October.

Places to visit

Fergus shares some of his favourite places to see plants at their best.

Coton Manor Garden A visit to Coton is always wonderful and takes you back in time. The ten acres of peaceful gardens are family run and not over commercialised. Landscaped into the hillside surroundings, the gardens comprise distinct areas including a lovely informal terrace, walls dripping with climbers, mixed borders, woodlands, wild-flower meadows and a nursery where you can buy plants. Open June – September, Tuesdays – Saturdays, 12-5.30pm. Near Guilsborough, Northamptonshire NN6 8RQ. Tel 01604 740219, www.cotonmanor.co.uk

Coton Manor, Northamptonshire

ANDREW BASKOTT / ALAMY

Old Court Nurseries and The Picton Garden Old Court Nurseries is the birthplace of modern asters hybridised by Ernest Ballard. This is now a

Salvia microphylla 'Cerro Potosi'

This high-altitude, small-leaved sage is hardier than most and can regenerate after cold winters. Forms an evergreen, woody-stemmed, domed bush covered in aromatic light green leaves with large magenta-pink flowers with fat fan-shaped lower lips that are carried on short flowering spikes above the foliage. Large flowers and vibrant colour makes this a conspicuous *S. microphylla* and the only one to stand out from a crowd at the RHS Wisley Trials last year. Flowers over a long season into the winter if weather allows.

Height/Spread 60cm x 60cm. AGM.
Origins Collected 3,680m up Mt Cerro Potosi, Sierra Madre, Northeast Mexico.
Hardiness rating RHS H3-H4, USDA 7a.
Conditions Full sun in well-drained soil.
Season June – November.

Canna x ehemanii

Perhaps the most elegant of cannas, with large impressive fresh green paddle-shaped leaves not too dissimilar to those of a banana. Each leaf is margined with a decorative thin line of red and is held splaying out from tall, gently arching stems adding grace to an otherwise muscular body. Loose panicles of beautiful and flamboyant watermelon-pink flowers are held dangling in drooping pendants from the tops of each stem. This is an exquisitely proportioned plant with a sophisticated poise that many other cannas lack.

Height/Spread 3m x 1m. AGM.
Origins Native of Peru, Columbia and Costa Rica occurring at 1,800-2,850m.
Conditions Moist, well-drained soil in full sun.
Hardiness rating RHS H3, USDA 7b-11.
Season August – first frosts.

Aster thomsonii

Along with *Aster* x *frikartii* 'Mönch' (of which *Aster thomsonii* is a parent) this is the longest-flowering Michaelmas daisy. Hairy and rough textured with a greyish tone, it produces a profusion of slender stems from basal tufts that terminate in elegant, long, thin-rayed mid-mauve daisies each with a dirty yellow eye. Plants look thin at first but branch and flower repeatedly, building to a spectacular mound of colour into the autumn, making it one of the most generous of all perennials. Seldom needs deadheading as the old flowers melt away without spoiling the show.

Height/Spread 90cm x 40cm.
Origins Himalayas in Pakistan and India at 2,100-3,000m on dry woodland edges.
Conditions Full sun in most garden soils.
Season July – October.

third-generation family business run by the Pictons and is home to the Plant Heritage National Collection of autumn-flowering asters. Open May – 20 October, 11am-5pm (August – October) including bank holidays. Colwall, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6QE. Tel 01684 540416, www.autumnasters.co.uk

National Dahlia Society National Show takes place in Harrogate on 15 September. Last month I mentioned the regional dahlia shows but if you want to see the very best of British greenfingers then this is the place to be. Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate HG2 8NZ. www.dahlia-nds.co.uk

The Exotic Garden at Great Dixter In September and October you'll find the Exotic Garden at its height with swashbuckling tropicals colocasias, begonias, farfugiums, cannas and dahlias sharing the warm, late-summer ground with eucalyptus and old roses. Christo felt closer to the equator here in a place where you can lose yourself among lush vegetation. Northiam, Rye, East Sussex TN31 6PH. Tel 01797 252878, www.greatdixter.co.uk

National Dahlia Society Show, Harrogate

ROGER COPE/ALAMY

The Inchbald School of Garden Design

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Stephane Lustig www.lustigoutdoordesign.co.uk
Recently qualified garden design graduate

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The Inchbald School of Garden Design enabled me to turn my life around. I was cabin crew for 13 years before I finally took a leap of faith and signed up for the diploma. Now I'm a busy garden designer. I couldn't have even imagined a better outcome than this.

Graduate Courses

The Diploma in Garden Design course provides a thorough training in garden design, enabling students to enter garden design at a professional level. It is an intensive year-long course, requiring commitment from you, but as such enables you to achieve high standards in a relatively short time.

You will be introduced to the design method through mainly residential garden projects that increase in complexity as the course progresses. You will receive tutoring by professional designers in studio, and this is supported by lectures covering aesthetic and practical issues by renowned garden design professionals.

The Inchbald School of Design gives careers advice, and students in the garden design school have been developing successful garden design careers for over 30 years.

Short Courses

A two day a week vocational diploma course offers students simple paving to advanced step design, they will study the various skills needed to confidently design walls, fences, structures and water features together with lighting and irrigation. Students will also acquire the knowledge necessary to produce construction drawings.

Students are taken through the principles and practices of good business and also have the opportunity to set up as Sole Traders, with guidance, whilst on the course.

Online Courses

Dynamic and inspirational, these three-month part-time courses will guide you through the design process so that you can create your own garden or living space. With ongoing support and advice from a practising professional and backed by the expertly produced course materials, you will develop your design ideas to produce a scheme that meets your needs on a functional and aesthetic level.

Each course is made up of an online induction and 12 sessions. You study just one session a week. The course takes about four hours a week, but don't be surprised if you become so engrossed in design that you end up spending more time than this.

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Prolonging colour

The vibrancy of your garden is just about starting to fade, but there's still plenty of time and opportunity to draw out the glorious colours as long as possible

WORDS **LIA LEENDERTZ** ILLUSTRATION **PETRA BÖRNER**

Buy wallflowers

In early autumn, when all the bounty of the season is only just starting to fade, my mind drifts to wallflowers. Last autumn I was handed a fistful of excess plants by an allotment neighbour and it seemed churlish not to roughly heel them in to the garden borders. Long, dull, grey months later my garden erupted into orange, yellow and deepest red splashes. I may go for subtle *Erysimum* 'Sweet Sorbet' this year – where each flower morphs tastefully from lilac to peach with age – or just stick to council bedding colours. They'll be ripped out come May, and enjoyed almost equally in the meantime.

Take mint cuttings

Niki Segnit in her *Flavour Thesaurus* rather beautifully calls mint 'a summery herb that yearns for the cold; the flavour of shade'. Although it vanishes underground come autumn you can prolong its presence into the cooler months by taking cuttings now. It is to the searching, colonising roots that you need to turn for your winter supplies. Tip out a pot of mint and look for long, white roots circling the edges. These are trying to spread, and so are ripe for cutting, with sharp secateurs, into lengths a few inches long, and placing on to the surface of a pot of compost. Cover with a little more compost and water, and place on your kitchen windowsill for winter-long mint.

Plant sources of autumnal nectar

If your planting is summer-centric, this time of year starts to slide into brown. It needn't yet. Asters, sedums and echinaceas are the basics of the autumn garden, picking up the baton in a gloriously colourful fashion. They also all have the benefit of being nectar rich, and so they extend your garden's usefulness for nectar-seekers, which are currently storing up resources and strength ahead of winter. My autumn addition this year will be the excellently named *Echinacea* 'Tomato Soup', which really is the colour of Heinz's.

Things to do

Plant narcissus bulbs now. Other bulbs can wait a little, but narcissus in particular like to be in the ground early.

Bring any houseplants that have been outside for summer back indoors, checking carefully for pests.

Divide and replant spring- and summer-flowering herbaceous perennials.

Give hedges their last trim of the year.

Pinch out the tops of tomato plants. You want no further growth, and for the plant to concentrate on ripening fruits.

Cut the fruited canes of summer raspberries down to ground level.

An Advertisement Feature by Thomas Sanderson

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Transform your conservatory for less this summer with 3 for 2 on made to measure conservatory blinds, exclusively by Thomas Sanderson.

Conservatory blinds are not just about making your room look good. They also do a very important job in the conservatory environment where outside temperatures can dramatically affect the room. Summer is well and truly with us so it's time to sit back and take pleasure in your garden, and your conservatory is the perfect place in which to enjoy your green space.

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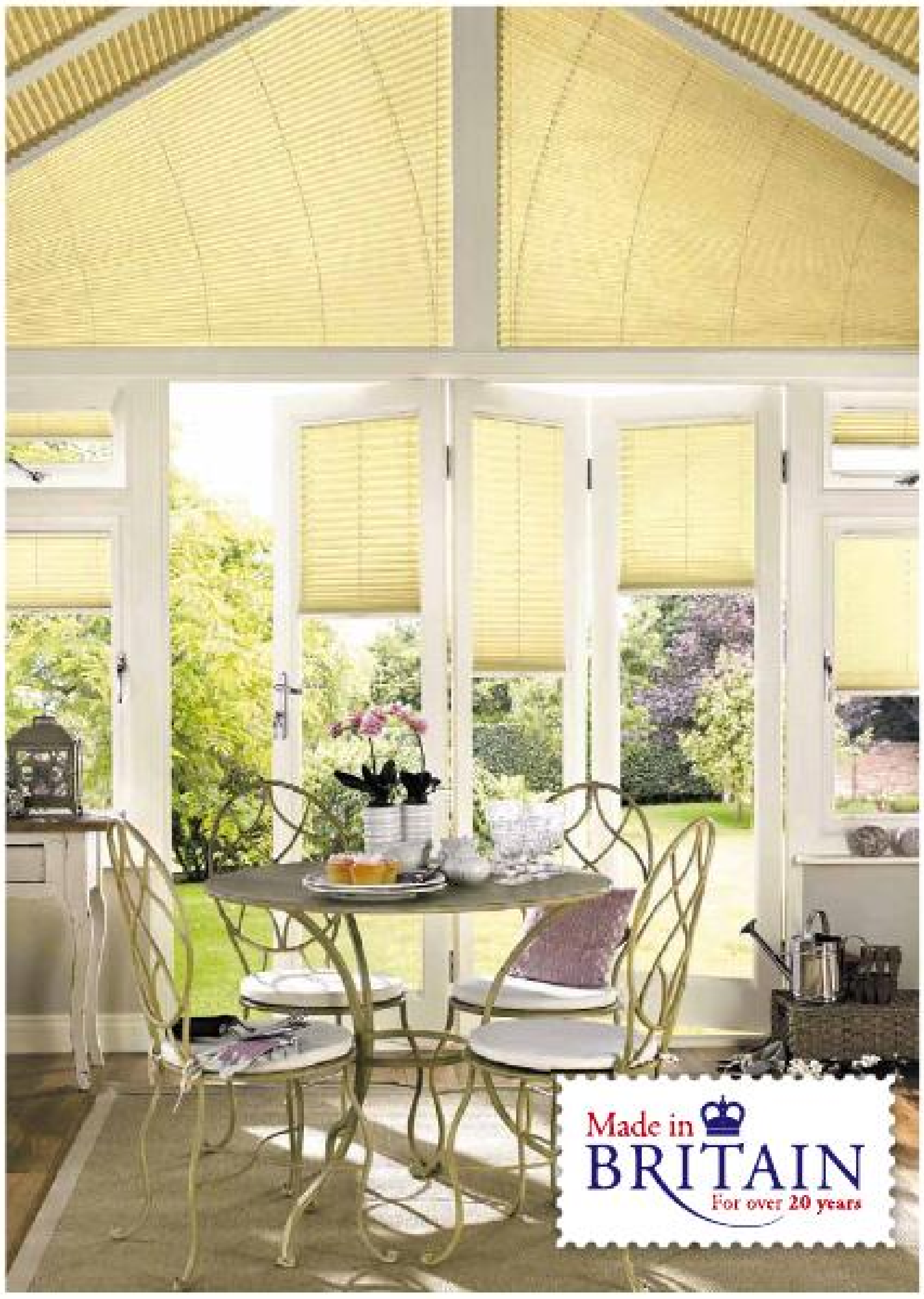

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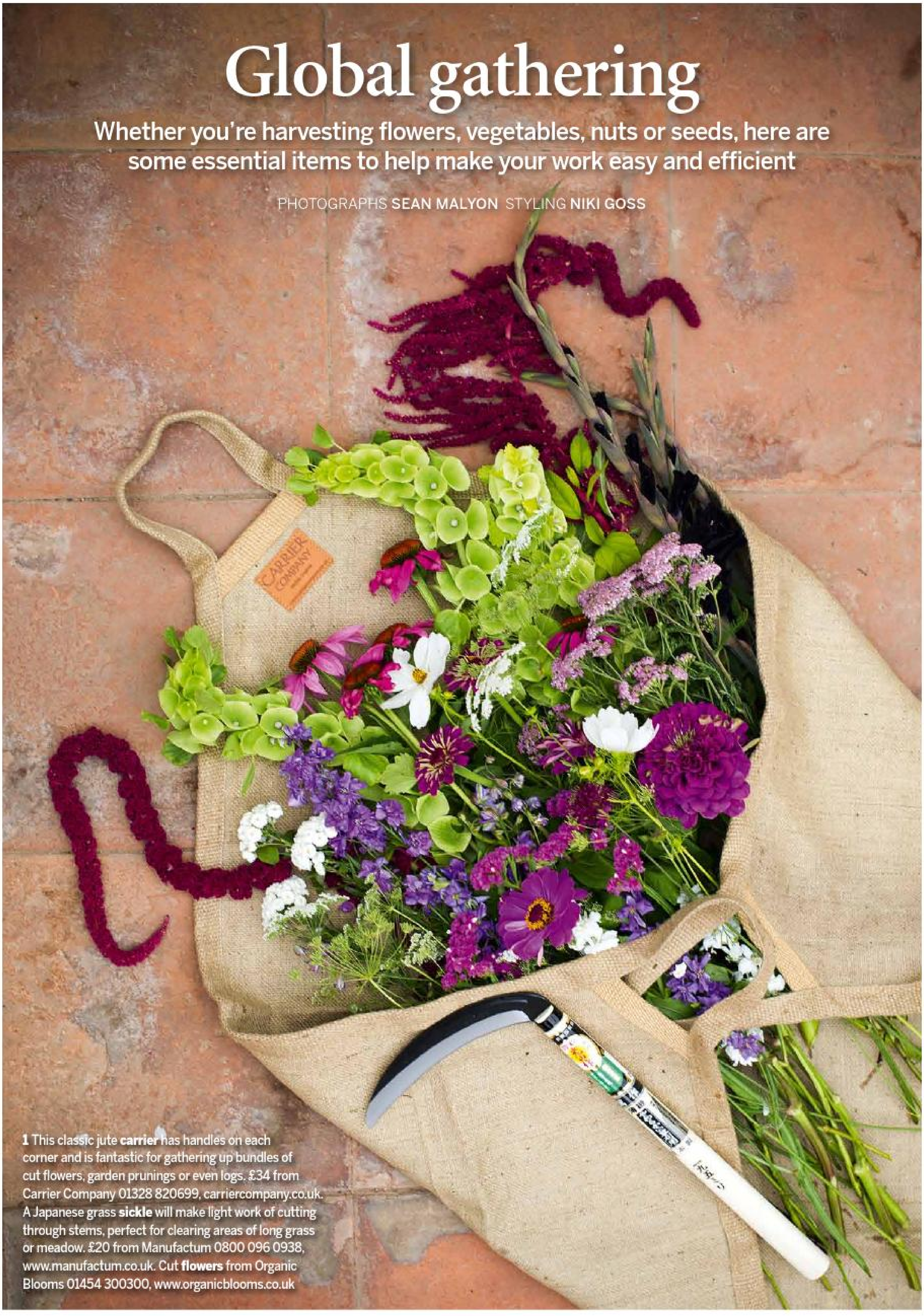
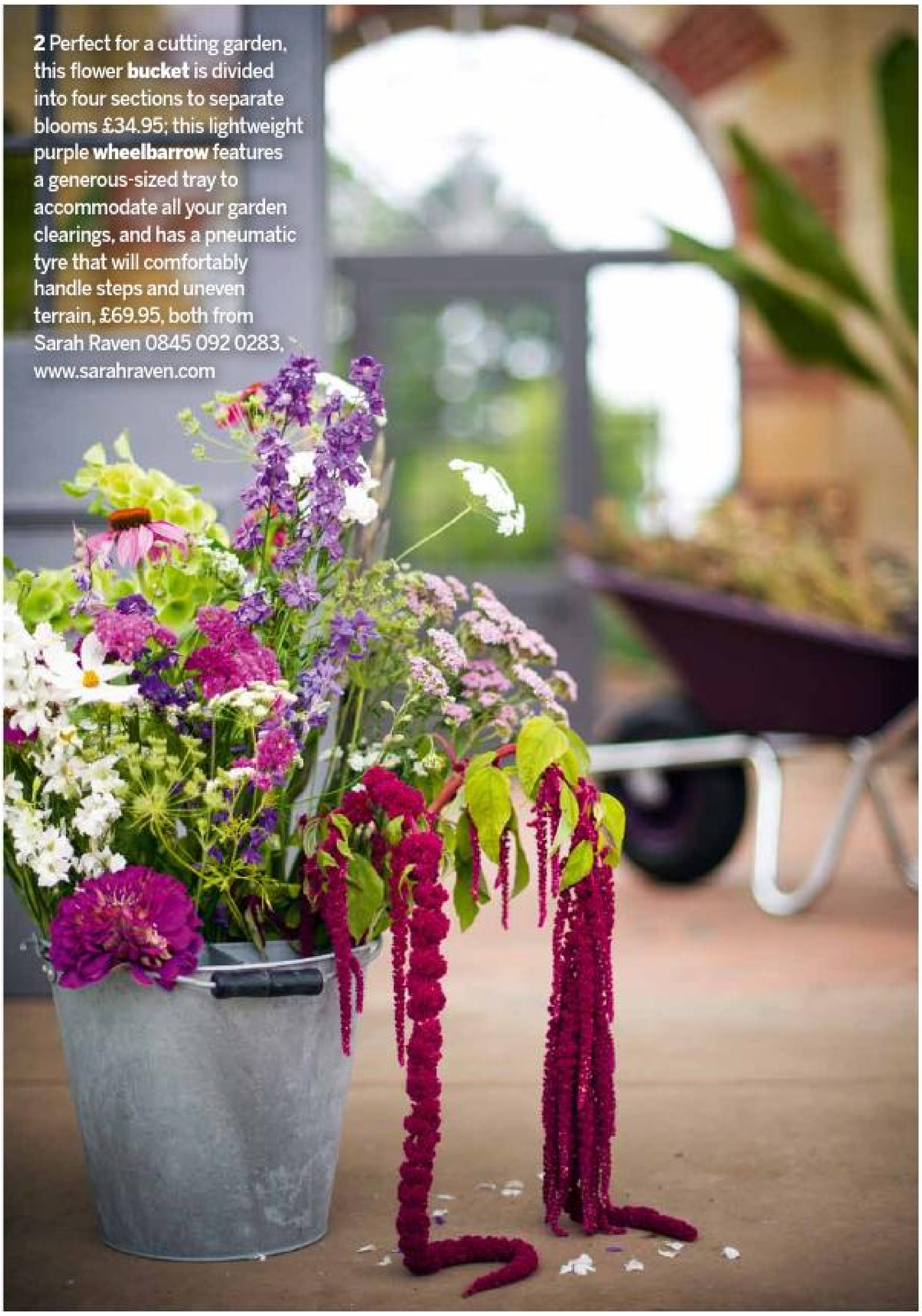
Global gathering

Whether you're harvesting flowers, vegetables, nuts or seeds, here are some essential items to help make your work easy and efficient

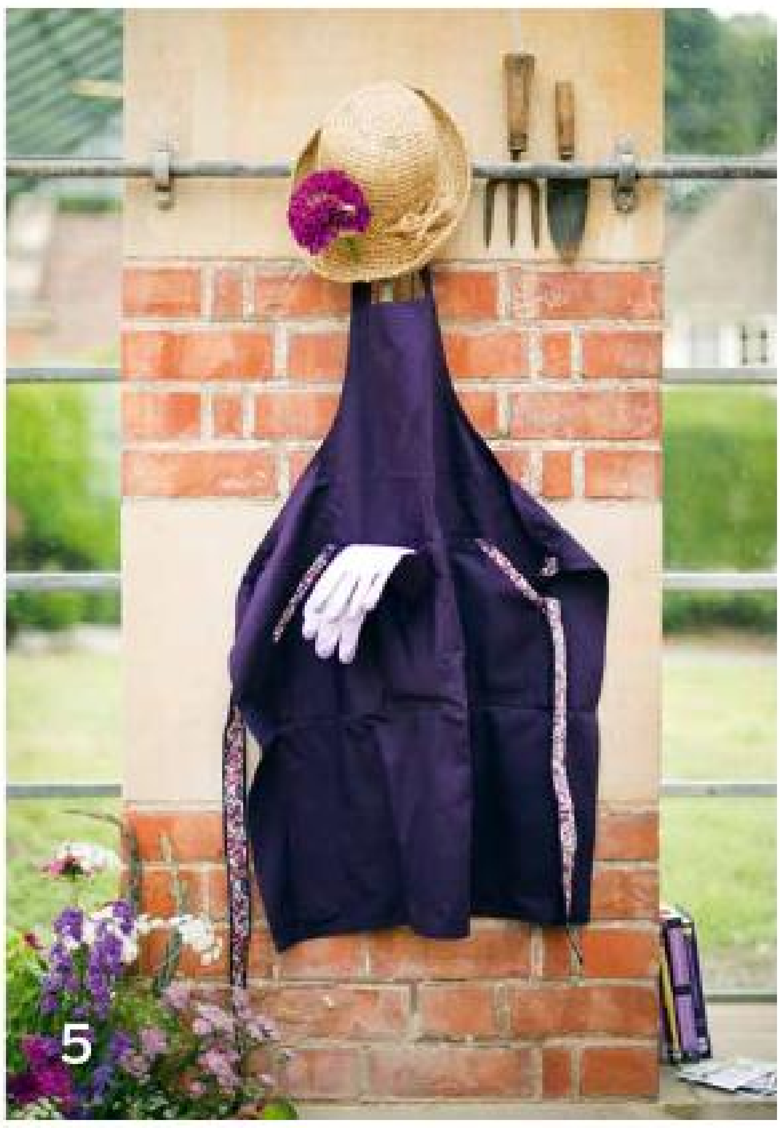
PHOTOGRAPHS **SEAN MALYON** STYLING **NIKI GOSS**



1 This classic jute **carrier** has handles on each corner and is fantastic for gathering up bundles of cut flowers, garden prunings or even logs. £34 from Carrier Company 01328 820699, carriercompany.co.uk. A Japanese grass **sickle** will make light work of cutting through stems, perfect for clearing areas of long grass or meadow. £20 from Manufactum 0800 096 0938, www.manufactum.co.uk. Cut **flowers** from Organic Blooms 01454 300300, www.organicblooms.co.uk



2 Perfect for a cutting garden, this flower **bucket** is divided into four sections to separate blooms £34.95; this lightweight purple **wheelbarrow** features a generous-sized tray to accommodate all your garden clearings, and has a pneumatic tyre that will comfortably handle steps and uneven terrain, £69.95, both from Sarah Raven 0845 092 0283, www.sarahraven.com



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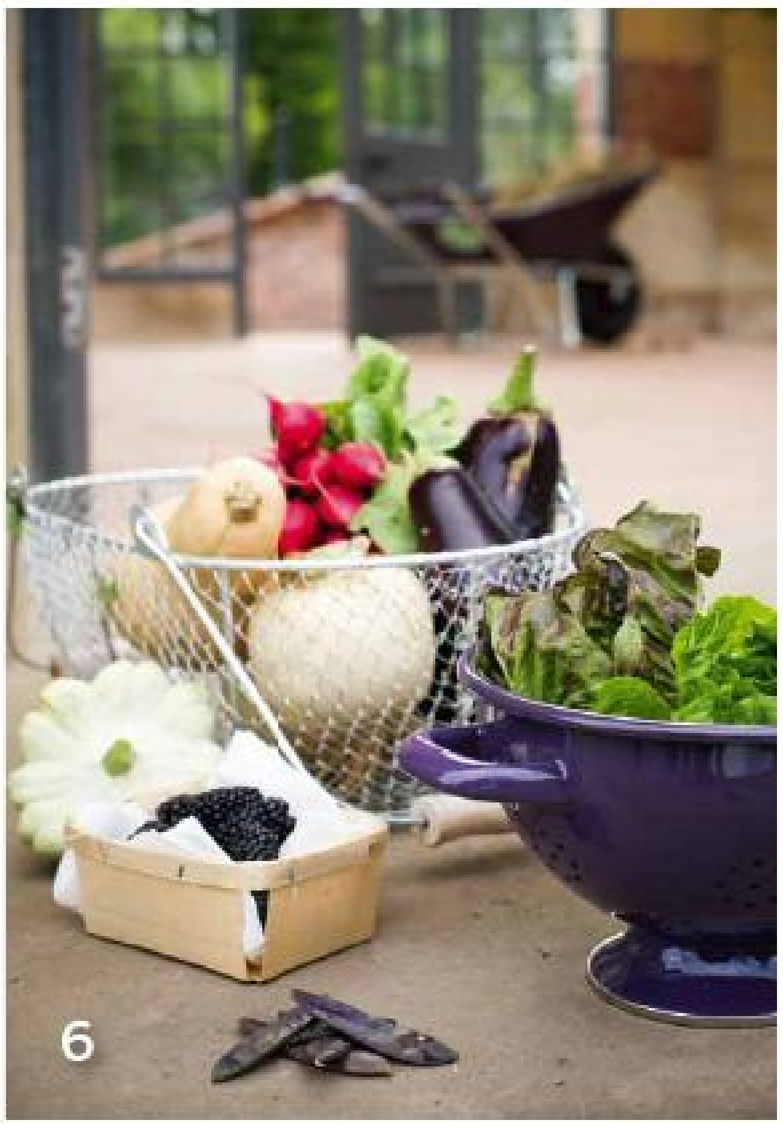

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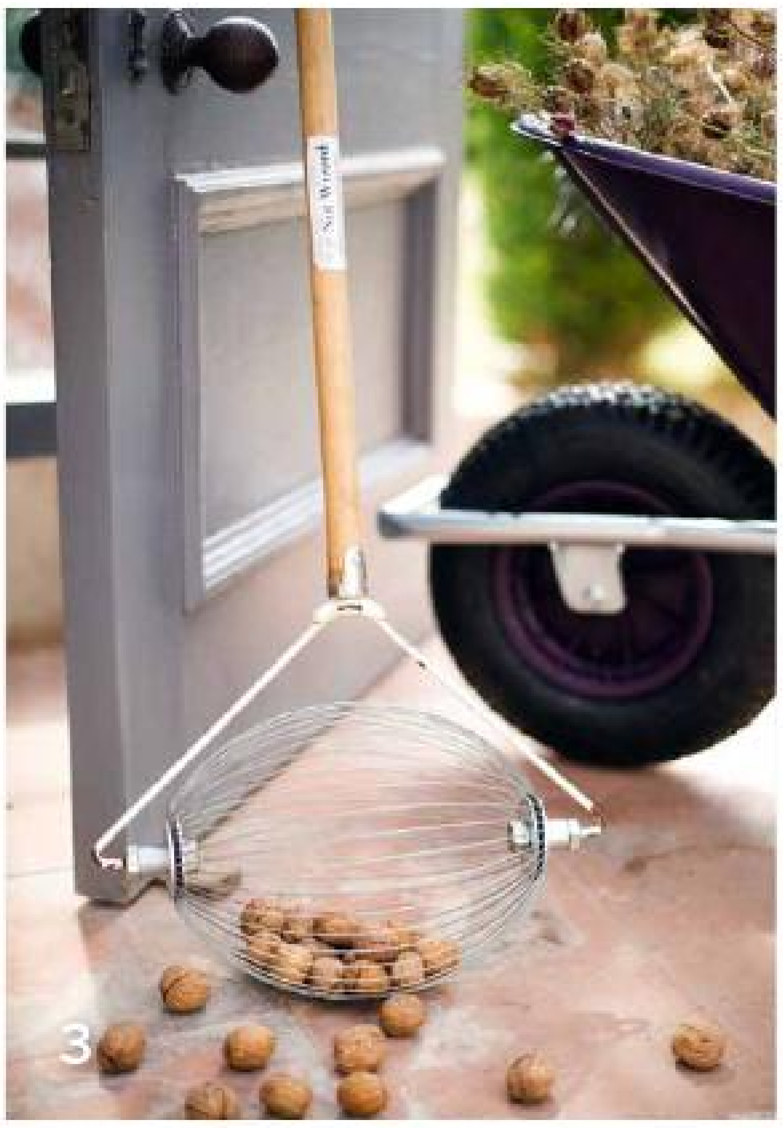

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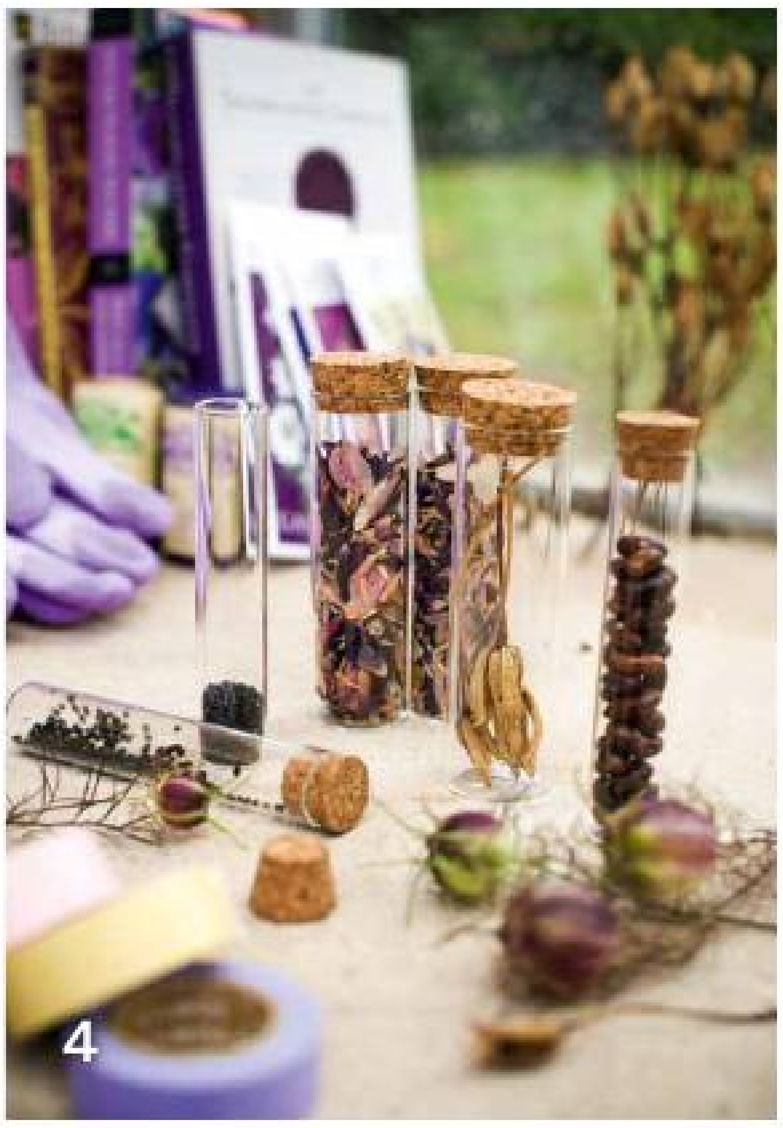

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3 The **Walnut Wizard** makes light work of gathering fallen walnuts as you roll it along the ground, £49.50 for similar from Home and Garden Gifts 01788 576750, www.homeandgardengifts.co.uk

4 Collect harvested seed in these glass storage **test tubes** with cork stoppers, £9 for a set of either four 3cm-wide tubes, or six 2cm tubes from Rockett St George 01444 253391, www.rockettstgeorge.co.uk

5 Gardener's full **apron** in 'aubergine' with floral contrast trim, £32 from Pinks and Greens 01379 588090, www.pinksandgreens.co.uk. Trekmates seagrass **sun hat** £20 from Cotswold Outdoors 0844 557 7755, www.cotswoldoutdoor.com. RHS 'Tough Tips' **gloves** £5.50 from Sarah Raven (see 2).

6 Stainless steel wire harvesting **trugs** £46.95 for a set of three sizes from Harrod Horticultural 0845 402 5300, www.harrodhorticultural.com. Fruit **punnets** £9.95 for six from Nutley's Kitchen Gardens 01903 233299, www.nutleyskitchengardens.co.uk. Purple enamel **colander** £24.95 from Sarah Raven (see 2).

Shot on location at Tyntesfield, North Somerset, with kind permission of the National Trust.

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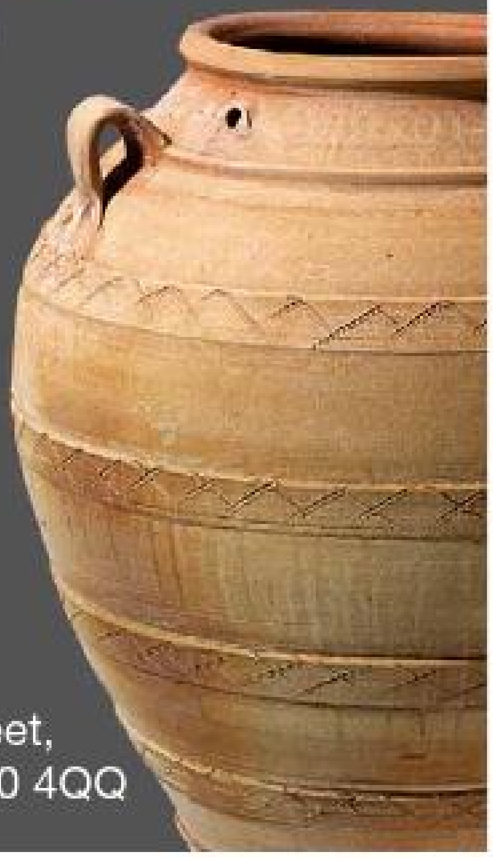

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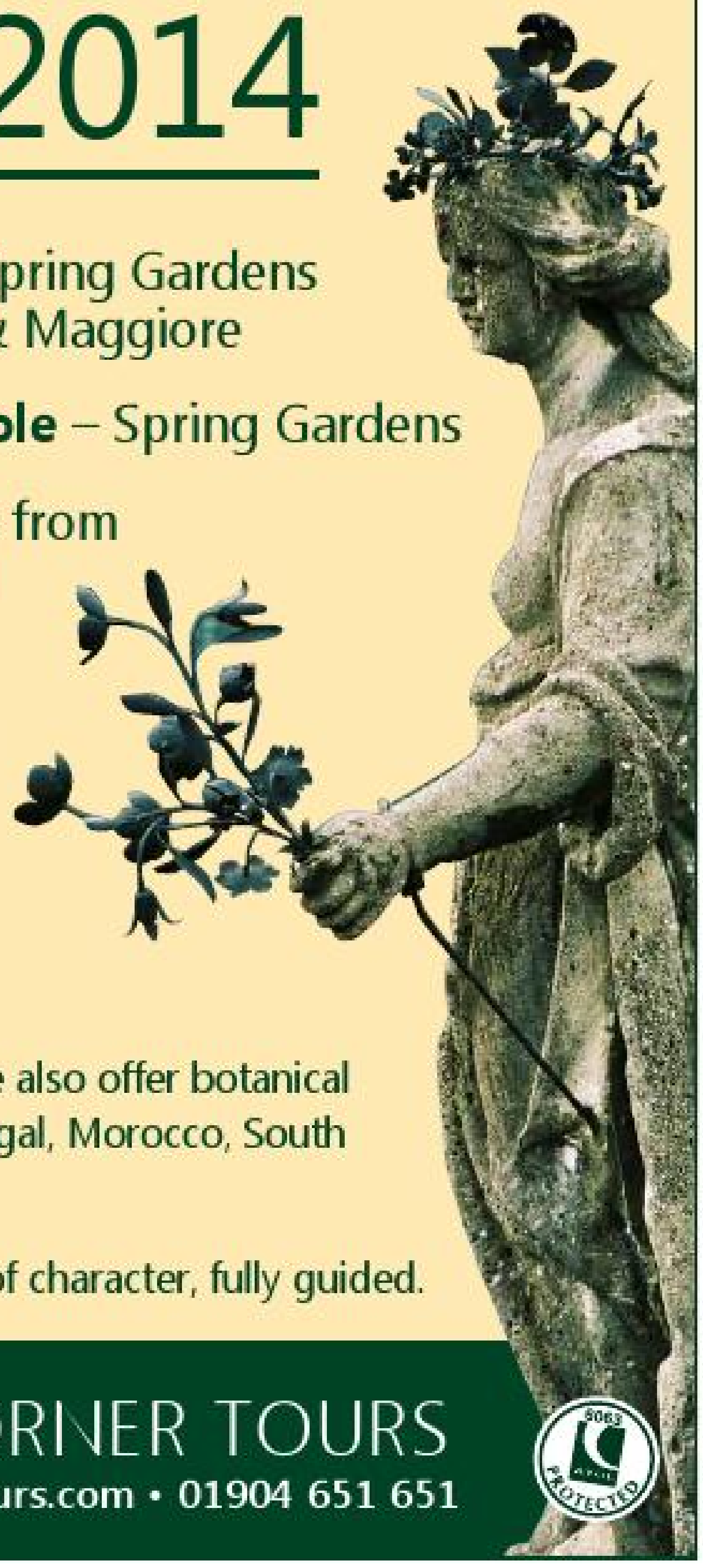

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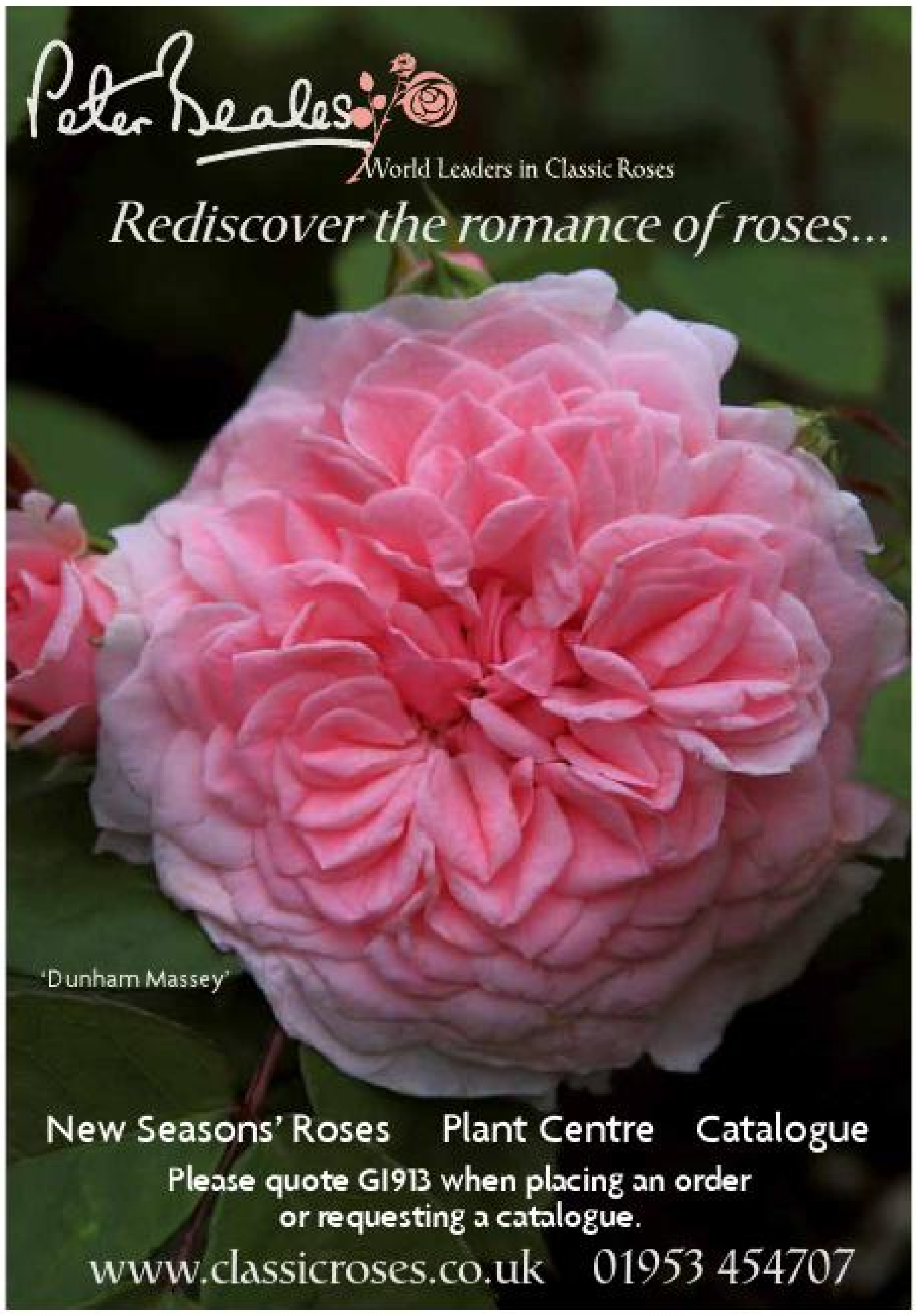

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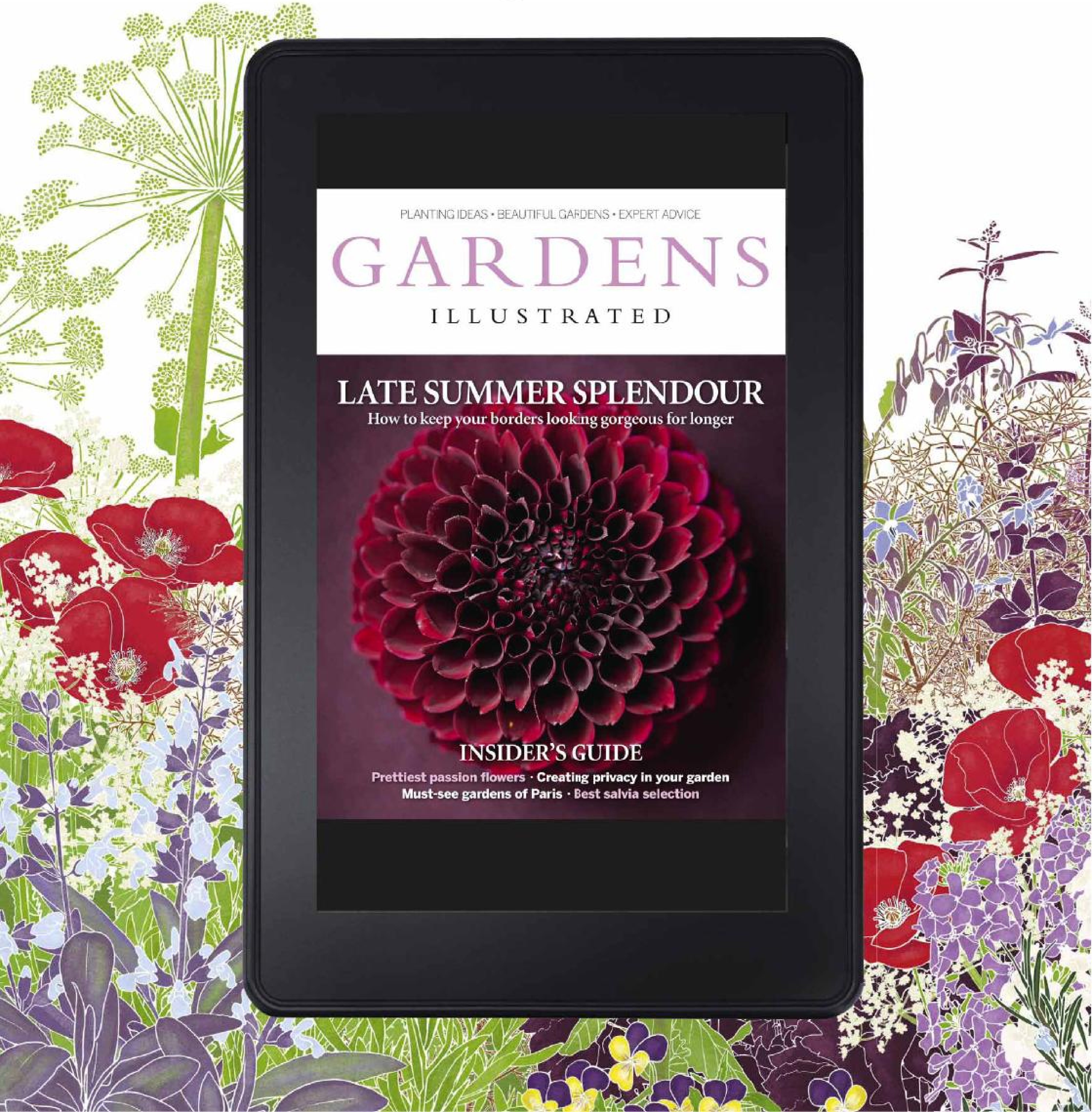

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GARDENS
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Around almost every corner of Eric and Joy's romantic garden you'll find statues, architectural ruins and, of course, beautiful, exuberant planting.

In brief

Name Great Comp Manor.
What Romantic country garden planted around 'ruins' and architectural features. Formal at its heart and then increasingly informal as it radiates from the house with curving lawns and island beds beneath specimen trees that lead to winding paths through mature woodland.
Where The Weald of Kent.
Size Seven acres.
Climate Moderately sheltered from prevailing westerly wind and the chillier north-easterly off the Downs. In winter temperature has been known to drop to -11°C, but more commonly -9°C.
Soil Slightly acid sandy loam on a greensand ridge.
Points of interest Peaks in late summer and early autumn when at its colourful best.

A fine romance

Eric and Joy Cameron worked together for more than 20 years to create a fabulous, folly-filled delight of a garden – now home to one of the country's finest collections of salvias

WORDS **STEPHANIE DONALDSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **MARIANNE MAJERUS**

Civil engineers like projects, which may explain why when the late Roderick Cameron saw the advertisement for Great Comp in *Country Life* in 1957, he abandoned his plans to retire to a modest country cottage and chose instead to buy the somewhat neglected 17th-century manor house with a garden that consisted of a croquet lawn, a paddock, an avenue of limes and some rough woodland – all surrounded by lettuce fields. This change of plan would have Eric (as he was known) and his wife Joy, labouring in these seven acres for the remainder of their lives.

Seemingly undaunted by what they had undertaken, the pair set about clearing the land. They planted hundreds of trees for privacy as well as shelter from the prevailing winds and, strongly influenced by the contemporary fashion for conifers and heathers, they began to create their garden. As they worked, they uncovered seams of ironstone and ragstone that Eric happily stockpiled while he plotted how best to use it. He found inspiration from their frequent visits to other gardens, as well as his war service in Italy where he had fallen in love with the architecture of ancient Rome. A plan was devised to build 'ruins' as a way of reusing the stone. When a builder employed to reroof the house heard of 18,000 bricks going cheap, Eric sketched out a plan to use them, inspired by the Forum in Rome. The garden at Great Comp continues to feature what might be described as an 'architectural miscellany', ranging from his picturesque ruins to the walled Italian Garden.

Eric and Joy worked alone in the garden for 20 years but gradually as they got older they reluctantly acknowledged they needed

Continued on page 34 ▷

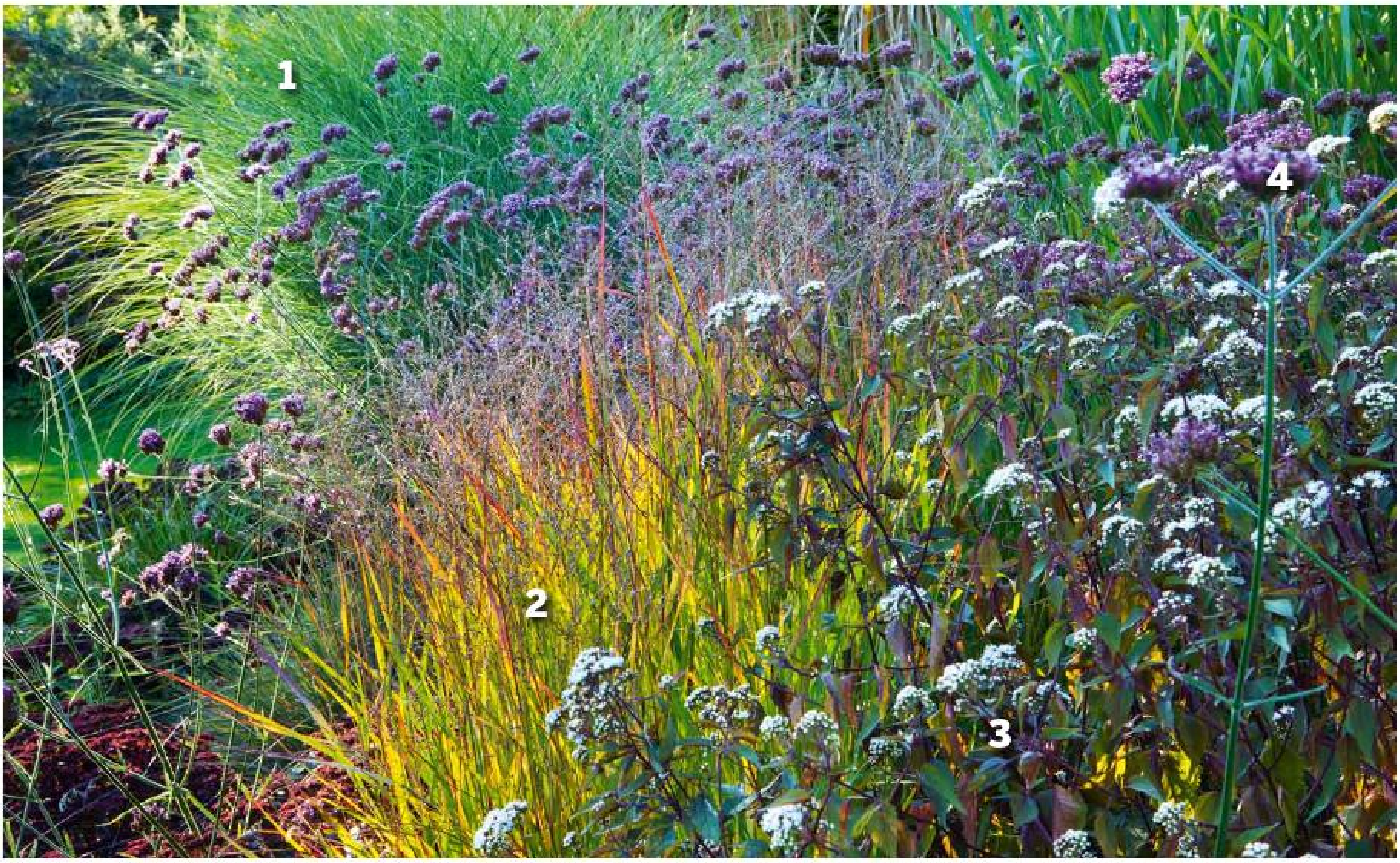
Top left In a quiet corner an Italianate stone bust is surrounded by yellow *Solidago rugosa* 'Fireworks' and mauve blooms of *Salvia* 'Penny's Smile'.

Top right The Italian Garden is filled with colour from *Helenium* 'Rubinzwerg', *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii*, *Eupatorium maculatum* (Atropurpureum Group) 'Riesenschirm' and *Monarda* 'Violette'.

Bottom left *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Zebrinus' and soft pinks of *Aster novae-angliae* 'Andenken an Alma Pötschke' create a dreamy setting for this stone urn.

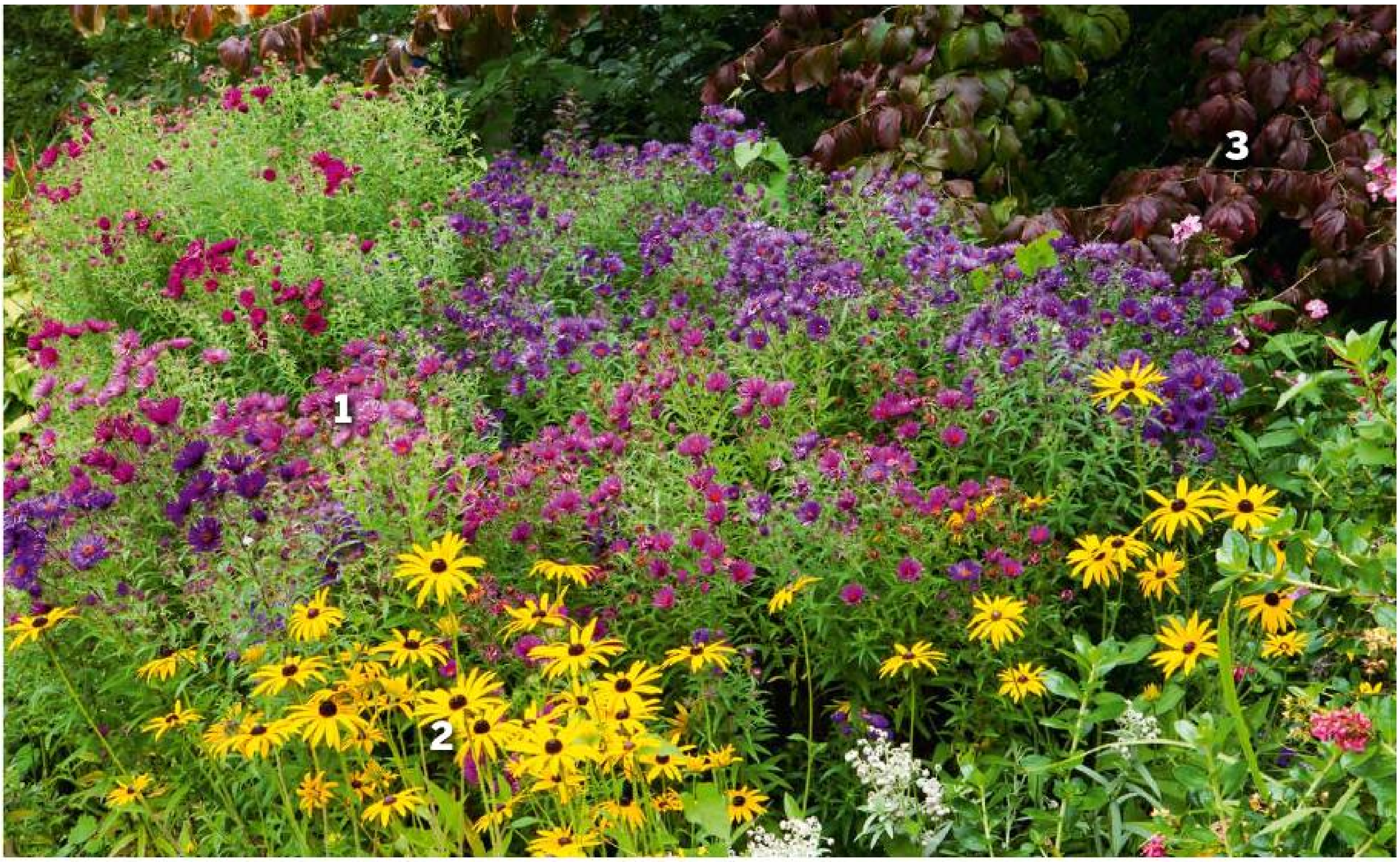
Bottom right Sedum and bergenia spill out over a path leading to the summerhouse.

Four plant combinations



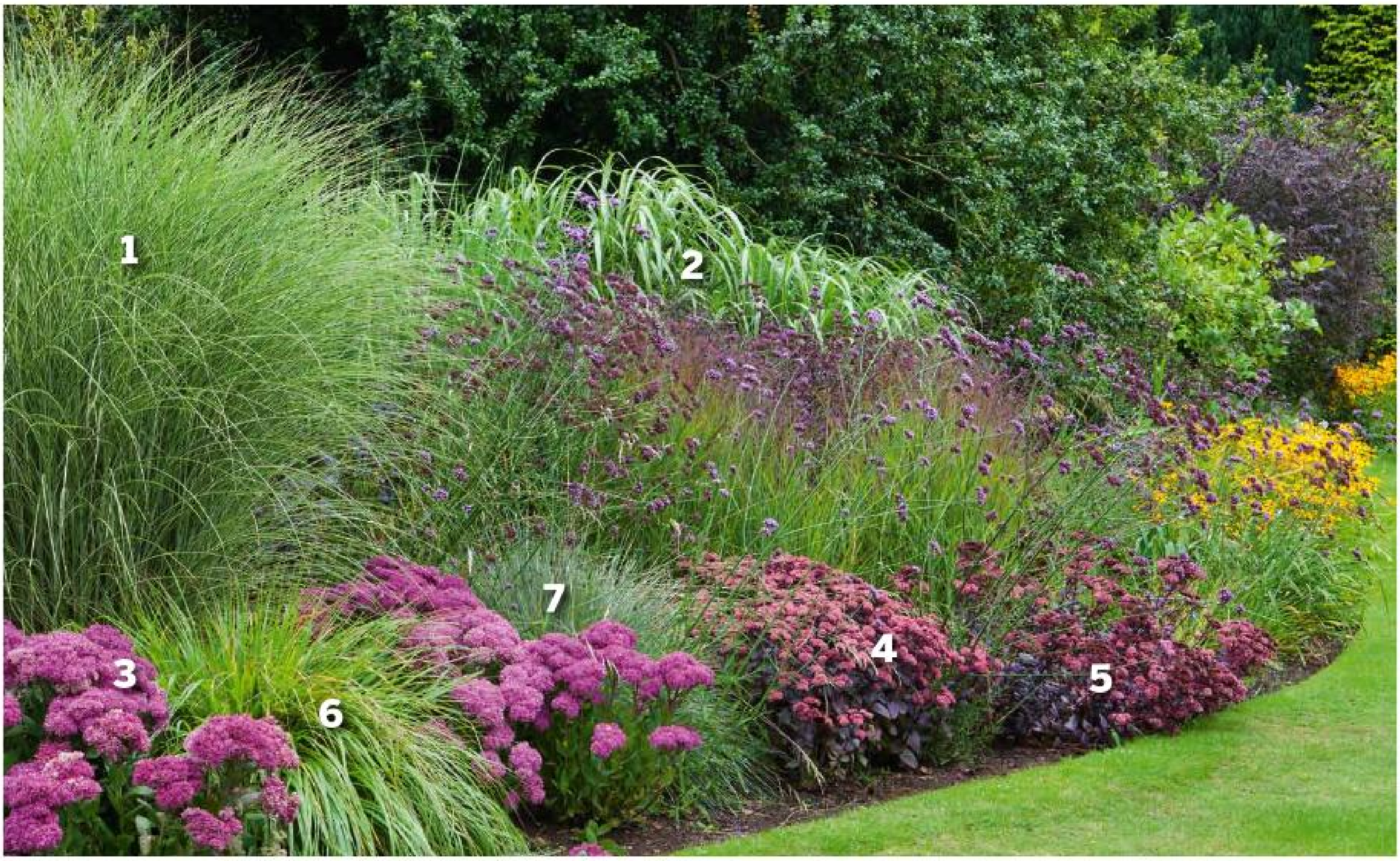
Sea of colour

The introduction of new borders planted with tall grasses and colourful perennials has added softness and movement to the Great Comp garden and updated the planting. Set against a backdrop of *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Light' **(1)**, gold and red autumn hues of *Panicum virgatum* 'Hänse Herms' **(2)** glimmer between white-flowered *Eupatorium rugosum* 'Chocolate' **(3)** and purple *Verbena bonariensis* **(4)**.



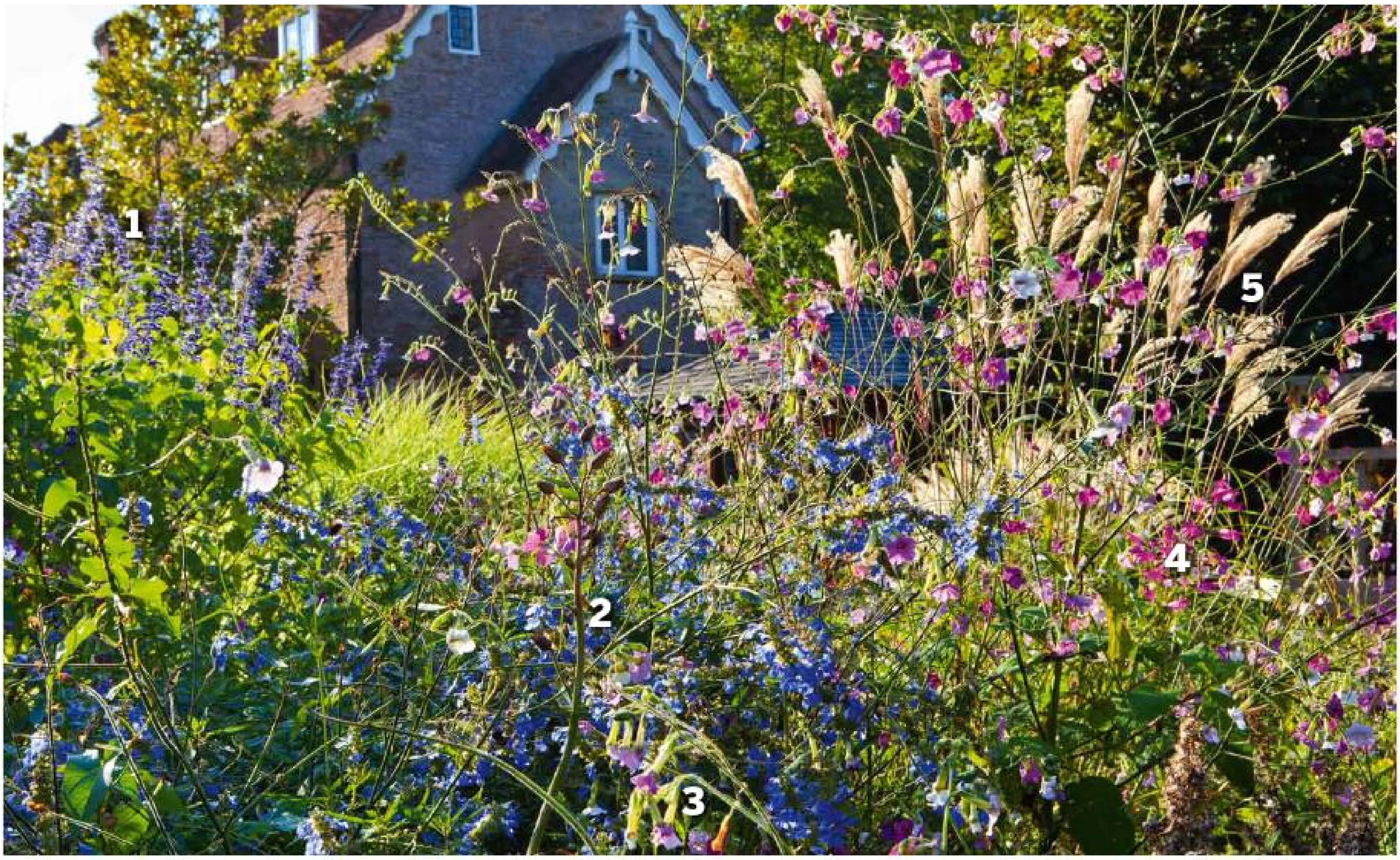
Bright and beautiful

A colourful array of unnamed *Aster novae-angliae* **(1)** seedlings that originated in the garden weave a band of purple and pink through the border, contrasting with bright yellow *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii* **(2)** in the foreground and the rich autumn colours of *Parrotia persica* **(3)** that overhangs the back of the border.



Elegant curves

Tall, fountain-like grasses provide an airy contrast to the solidity and darker foliage of the mature trees behind. *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Light' **(1)** and *Miscanthus sinensis* var. *condensatus* 'Cabaret' **(2)** provide height while in the foreground *Sedum* 'Mr Goodbud' **(3)**, *Sedum telephium* 'Karfunkelstein' **(4)** and *Sedum telephium* 'Purple Emperor' **(5)** are interspersed by lower-growing grasses *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln' **(6)** and *Helictotrichon sempervirens* **(7)**.



Hidden talents

Great Comp Manor can be glimpsed through the planting in this border where the clear blues of *Salvia guaranitica* **(1)** and *S. uliginosa* **(2)** are mixed with the delicate stems of *Nicotiana mutabilis* **(3)** and bright pinks of *S. involucrata* 'Boutin' **(4)**. Waving plumes of *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Sirene' **(5)** complete the picture.

Hidden behind fake ruined walls is a tranquil water garden.

The garden at Great Comp remains unashamedly romantic and old-fashioned

▷ help if their garden was to survive. By all accounts, Eric was not an easy man to work with; his friend Brian Self noted in Eric's obituary that '…a succession of worthy assistant head gardeners gained much life experience' as they attempted to forge a working relationship with him.

Eric finally met his match in William Dyson. As the two of them worked together sorting out the centre of the garden – and William improved and developed the nursery – they gradually got the measure of one another. "We had huge arguments, right from the early days," says William. "Eric would accuse me of being a 'root and branch man' and arguments would often end with 'you need to consider your position'. When he said that I knew I was winning!"

With Eric's agreement, William began to remove shrubs and trees that had outgrown their space and introduce new plants to add year-round colour to the garden. They included 100 cultivars of hardy geraniums as well as a kaleidoscopic range of 200 different salvias for which the garden is now justly famous. These plants, knitted together with miscanthus, formed the bones of new beds.

When William won a Gold Medal for his display of salvias at his first RHS Show Eric began to loosen the reins slightly. "We developed a mutual respect, culminating in Eric making me the curator and giving me a free hand," says William. Not that this meant that Eric sat back. He was still digging the garden well into his eighties and manned the entrance kiosk until the year before his death in 2009 at the age of 91.

Today the garden at Great Comp remains unashamedly romantic and old-fashioned, albeit with much-invigorated planting. The shelter belt planted by the Camerons encloses the garden, hiding it from surrounding farmland and muffling the sound of the not-too-distant motorways. The architectural features, immaculate yew hedges and specimen trees form a backdrop to the colourful borders where, during the late summer and autumn, salvias, asters and grasses create a multi-layered tapestry that leans over paths and margins the sweeping lawns. It is a hidden jewel. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Great Comp Garden, Comp Lane, Platt, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 8QS.

Tel 01732 885094.

Website www.greatcompgarden.co.uk Dyson's Nurseries mail-order salvias can be found on the same website.

Open Daily from 1 April – 31 October, 11am-5pm, last admission 4pm.

9 of William's favourite salvias

1 *Salvia* 'Amistad'
Reputedly hardy, this woody perennial has large, intensely deep purple flowers and black calyces. 1.2m.

2 *S. blepharophylla* 'Painted Lady'
Half-hardy herbaceous perennial with black-tinted foliage and large, bright scarlet flowers with velvety hair on the upper lip. Flowers June – November. 45cm.

3 *S. discolor*
Tender woody-based perennial. Purple-black flowers and foliage with mid-green upper surface and white undersides, stems and calyces. 60cm. RHS H1[†].

4 *S. involucrata* 'Boutin'
Sub-shrubby perennial hardy to mild winter. Flowers reliably and heavily, June – November. 1.2m. AGM*. RHS H3.

5 *S. × jamensis* 'Nachtvlinder'
Drought-tolerant shrubby perennial, hardy in full sun with good drainage in most areas. Dark maroon-purple flowers over a long period. 75cm.

6 *S. patens* 'Guanajuato'
Tuberous perennial, overwinters in mild areas, otherwise mulch or lift tubers. Bears deep blue flowers July – October. Needs support. 1.3m. USDA 8b-11[†].

7 *S.* 'Silas Dyson'
Shrubby perennial. Wine purple buds open rich crimson and mature to deep pinkish red. Flowers May – November, drought tolerant, hardy most areas. 90cm.

8 *S.* 'Dyson's Joy'
Compact bicoloured shrubby perennial, hardy in most areas and drought tolerant. Flowers May – November. 60cm.

9 *S. uliginosa*
Half-hardy upright herbaceous perennial prefers sunny position and well-drained soil. Clear blue flowers August – November, mulch in early winter. 1.8m. AGM.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
[†] Hardiness ratings given where available.

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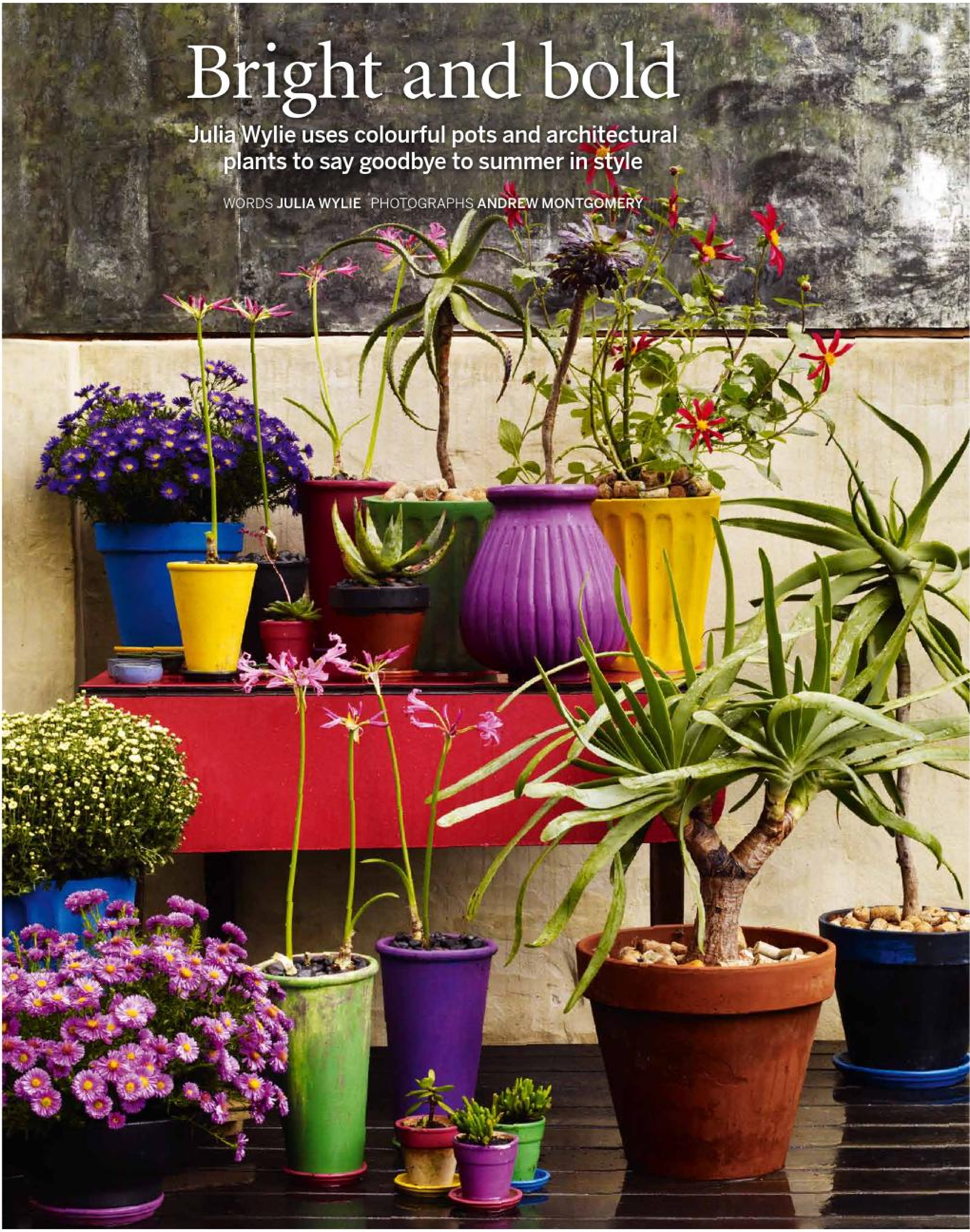
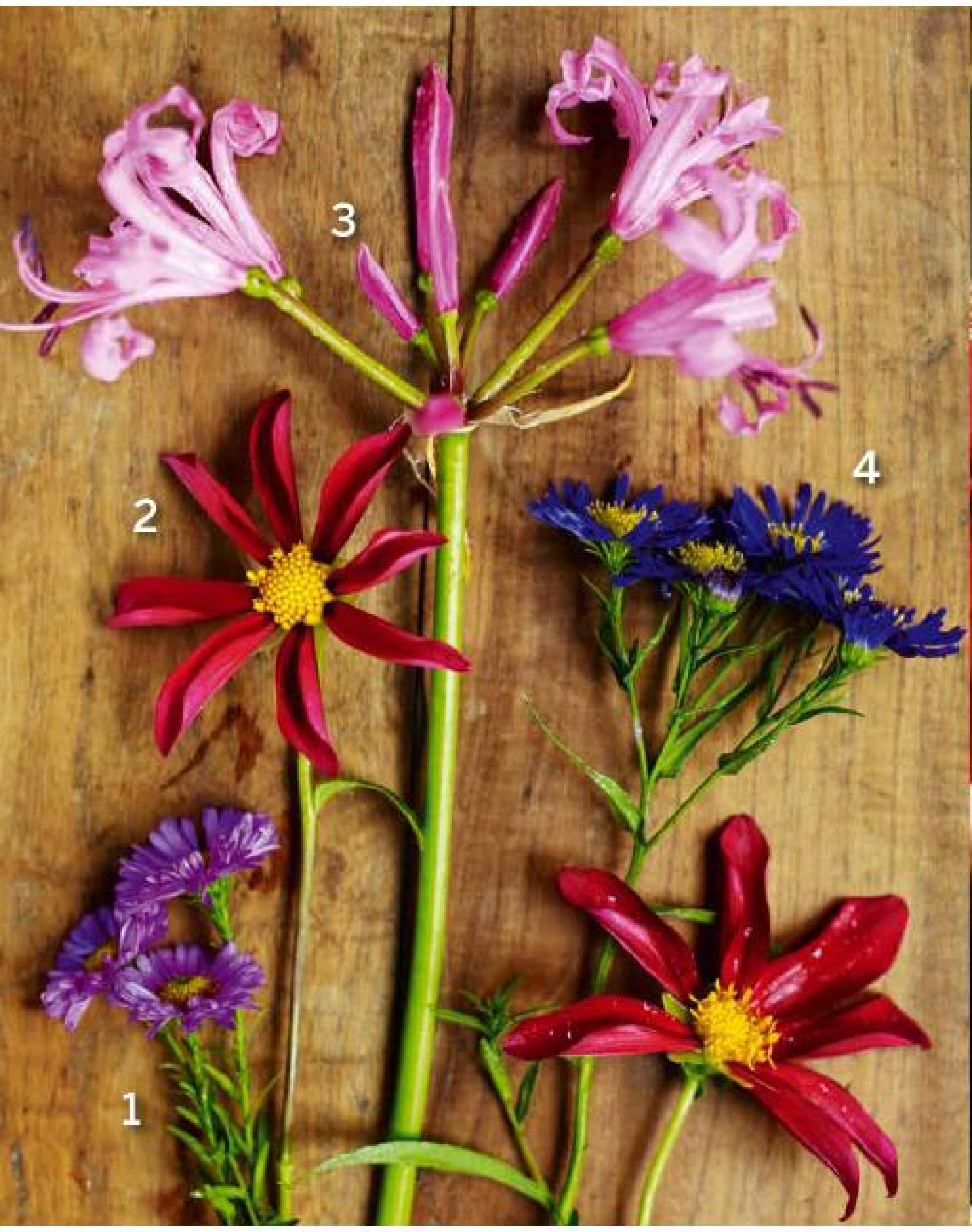
6 BLICKWINKEL / ALAMY

Bright and bold

Julia Wylie uses colourful pots and architectural plants to say goodbye to summer in style

WORDS **JULIA WYLIE** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREW MONTGOMERY**





Hockney homage

David Hockney's 2012 exhibition *A Bigger Picture* inspired me to be braver with colour. His subjects were mainly trees, wildflowers and landscapes, which made the bright paintings even more magical. I used water-based emulsion to retain the porous nature of the terracotta and develop a more weathered look. Vibrantly painted terracotta is not new: I was first inspired by the iconic Majorelle blue and bright yellow pots in the Jardin Majorelle in Marrakesh, where they accentuate the architectural green leaves of cacti and succulents. Having grown up on a farm in the arid eastern cape of South Africa, I am drawn to the plants' curious shapes and tough nature.

How to achieve the look

Cultivation and care

Containers allow you to give your chosen plants the exact growing media and conditions they prefer, so are perfect for cultivating exotic plants that evoke far-off places, especially if they need to be brought inside during the winter. For example, the large aloes remind me of my South African roots. They were a gift eight years ago and although they are relatively slow-growing, have more than doubled from their original size, and will soon be too big to fit into our living room – meaning I'll finally be forced to find space for a greenhouse.

During one of the aloes' winters inside, I started to put corks and driftwood around their bases. These are great for moisture retention and suppressing weeds, but also as a nostalgic reminder of fun escapades and evenings spent with friends.

Colour and shape

It was great fun choosing the plants whose shape or colour best suited each pot and its colour co-ordinated saucer. The quirky *Aeonium* looks even more eccentric in this curvaceous, narrow-necked Alhambra pot.

For a similar display to brighten dull autumn days try scented-leaved pelargoniums, *Eucomis* (pineapple) flowers, *Hedychium* (gingers), sunflowers and colourful vegetables. Painted food tins would look equally dramatic and are perfect for small succulents.

Plants (see above left)

1 & 4 *Asters* Autumn Jewels range
Height 25cm.
Season Late summer.
Amount 7-14 depending on container size.

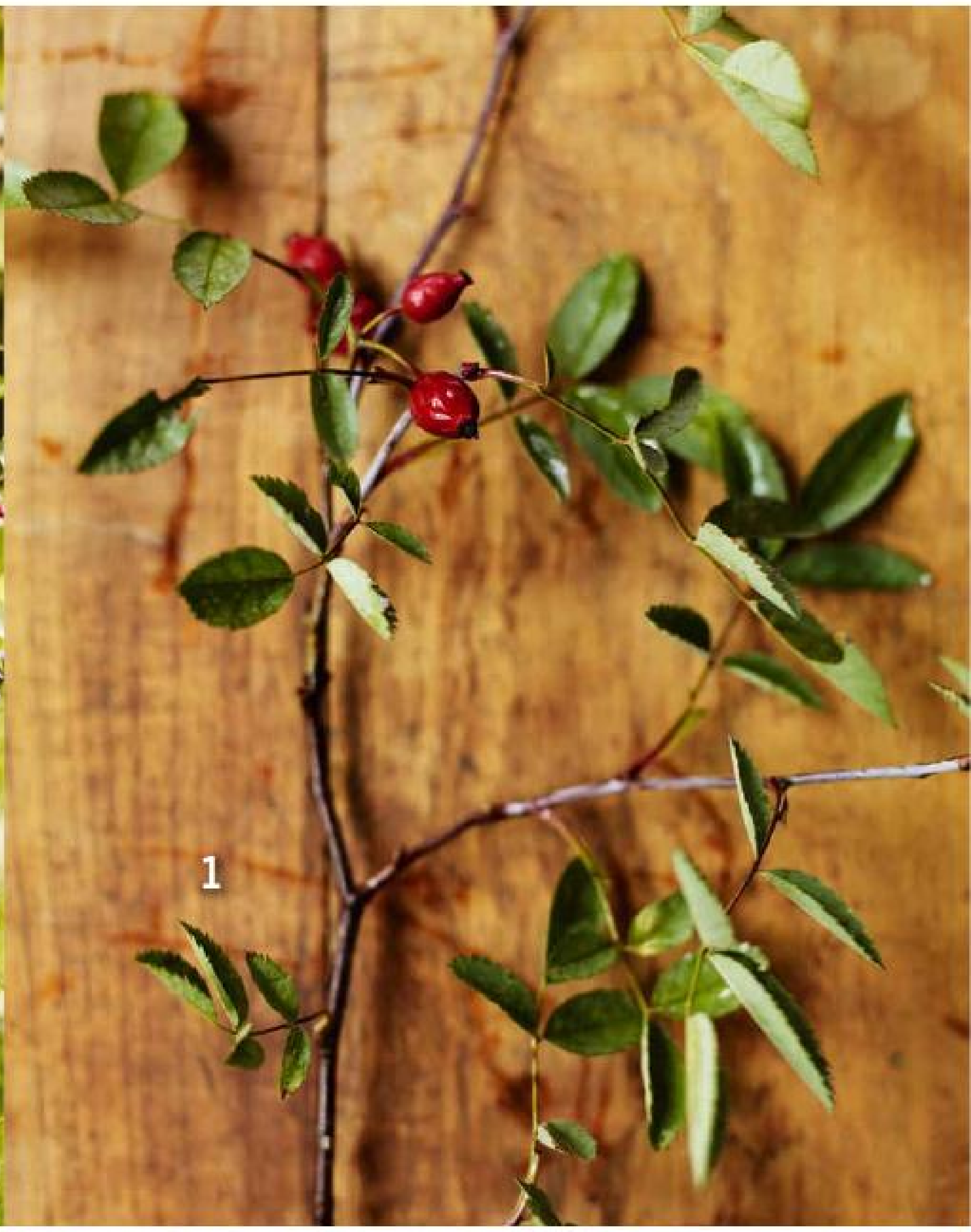
2 *Dahlia* 'Honka Red'
Height 50cm-1m.
Season July – October.
Amount 1-3 depending on container size and growing conditions.

3 *Nerine bowdenii*
Height 60cm.
Season September – November.
Amount 5-9 depending on size of containers used. AGM*. RHS H4†, USDA 8b-10b.

Suppliers

Wilsey Plant Centre (RHS) Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB. Tel 01483 211113, www.rhs.org.uk/wisleyplantcentre

Trewidden Nursery (for succulents) Penzance, Cornwall TR20 8TT. Tel 01736 362087, www.trewidden-online.co.uk



Gone to pot

Like a ruin, these chimney pots will soon be colonised by surrounding self-seeders, such as the grasses *Stipa tenuissima* and *Anemanthele lessoniana,* and *Dianthus carthusianorum*. This species rose could also have seeded itself, but I have accelerated the process, in my impatience to make the garden appear more established. The rose's wild arching habit contrasts with the vertical lines of the chimney pot and the dark glistening red hips will hang on long after the first frosts. Next spring its fresh purplish glaucous foliage will be a perfect foil for the neighbouring plants and its own delicate pink flowers in early summer.

How to achieve the look

Cultivation and care

Chimney or cylinder pots create a dramatic contrast when placed in groups with other pots that vary in shape and size. They can also host temporary installations with seasonal plants in containers that fit snugly in the top – trailing plants and grasses look especially good tumbling over the edges of tall narrow pots – but these require more water and care when cramped into the small space.

The deep-rooting nature of the rose will appreciate all the fresh soil to explore before finally reaching the ground below. The roots will be more vulnerable to frost so be sure to choose a similarly tough plant for a perennial display and drive a stake into the ground inside the chimney pot to prevent it being blown or knocked over.

For best foliage colour and brightest stems, remove one third of the rose's oldest wood in late winter, encouraging fresh shoots from the base.

Container

A friend found these two unusual chimney pots discarded on the pavement at the end of her road, but they are often for sale at reclamation yards. The striking black sooty markings on the pot in the foreground look as though they have been created by an artist for dramatic effect, but they are actually just the remnants of its former use.

Plants

The single pink flowers of the rose are attractive to bees and the red hips are very popular with birds.

1 ***Rosa glauca***
Height 1.5-2m.
Season April – October.
Amount 1 per container. AGM.
RHS H7, USDA 2a-9b.

Suppliers

Hill Park Roses
Woodstock Lane North, Surbiton,
Surrey KT6 5HN. Tel 020 8398 0022,
www.hillparkroses.co.uk

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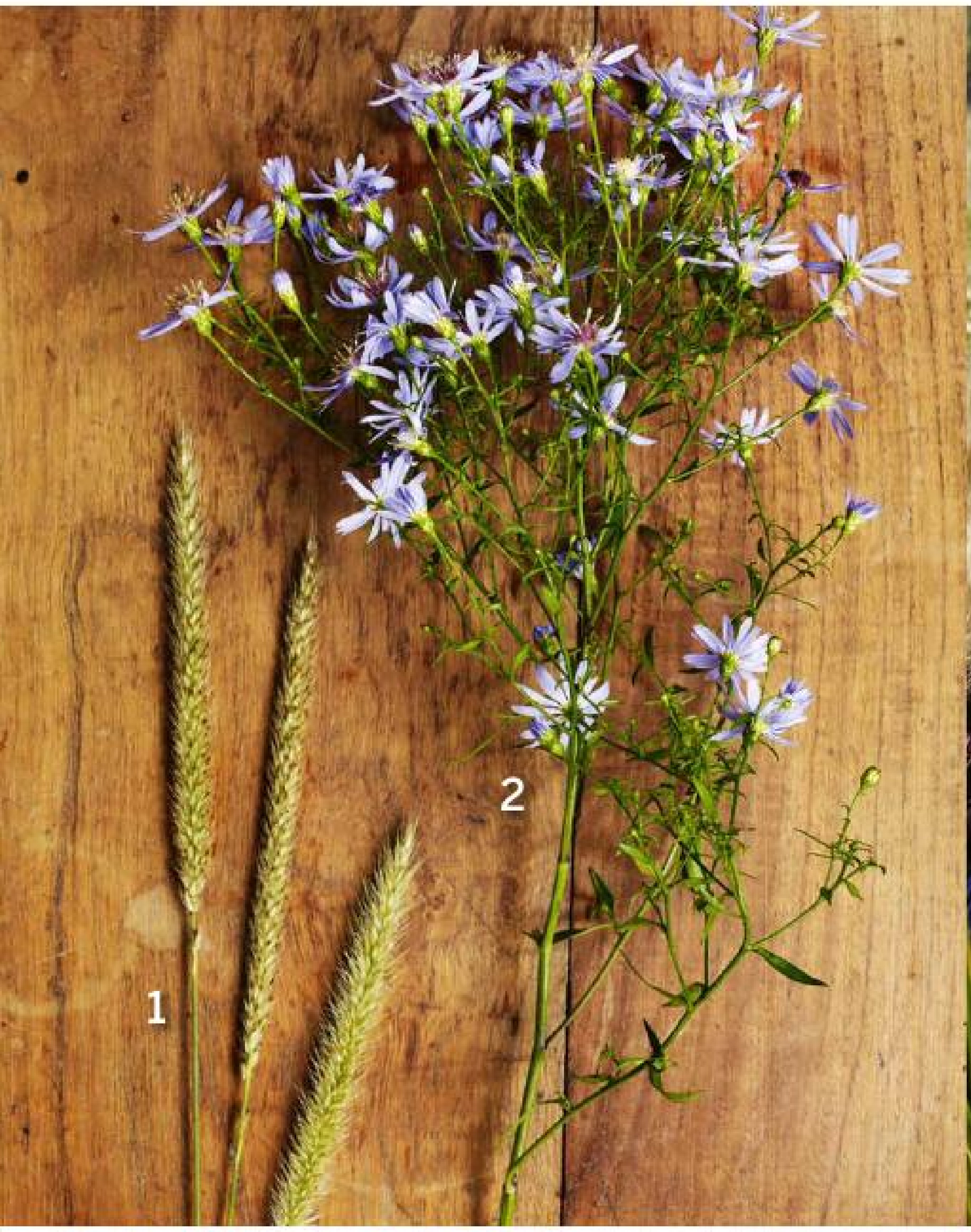
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society
†Hardiness ratings given where available



Aster explosion

This smart rusty pot would look equally striking if it were simply filled with the fluffy-flowered *Pennisetum* grasses, but I added asters for autumn colour and, more importantly, to provide late nectar for bees and butterflies. Aster seedheads also attract goldfinches in winter and look stunning when frosty. For earlier flowers and a longer season of colour, *Verbena bonariensis* is an option. Reed-like restios are an excellent alternative to grasses, providing movement as a contrast to any architectural pot in a sunny position, and creating dramatic shadows when placed against rendered walls. The delicate-leaved shrub creating the magical background is New Zealand native *Muehlenbeckia astonii*, which also does well in pots and on windy roof terraces.

How to achieve the look

Cultivation and care

Asters can be susceptible to mildew, but this cultivar is highly resistant; regular division in spring and an airy aspect will help to prevent problems. Water regularly to stop roots drying out. It makes an excellent cut flower and deadheading regularly will prolong flowering.

Pennisetum macrourum's striking, white bushy flowers last well into winter. Its drought-tolerant, grey-green, mound-forming leaves turn yellow in autumn. Propagate by division in spring: it is variable when grown from seed.

Both plants require a sunny site with a loam-based free-draining soil – use John Innes No.3 or similar with added grit – and water regularly. Cut down spent foliage and flowers in spring.

There are lots of other pennisetums that could be substituted if you are unable to source *P. macrourum*. Virtually all grasses do well in pots, but some are especially suitable. Try *Calamagrostis* and *Molinia*, which combine well with late-flowering perennials.

Container

I bought this smart hand-engineered, rusted-effect metal container from Knoll Grasses in Dorset – they can organise various shapes and sizes to be made to order. The sharp lines emphasise the soft billowing habit of grasses.

Plants

These are both very attractive to bees and butterflies and will flower profusely from spring to late summer (see above left).

1 ***Pennisetum macrourum***
Height 1-1.8m depending on growing conditions.
Season September – November.
Amount 5-7 depending on container size. RHS H3, USDA 9a-10b.

2 ***Aster* 'Little Carlow'**
Height 80cm.
Season September – October.
Amount 3-5 depending on container size. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.

Suppliers

Knoll Grasses Tel 01202 873931,
www.knollgardens.co.uk
Marchants Hardy Plants
Tel 01323 811737,
www.marchantshardyplants.co.uk

Head gardener Andy Eddy has created a real feast for the eyes in Osterley's busy but artfully crafted ornamental kitchen garden.

In brief

Name Osterley Park and House.
What 35 acres of gardens restored to their 18th-century grandeur, with an ornamental kitchen garden or potager designed to shock and please.
Where Isleworth, west London.
Size The gardens comprise 35 of the estate's 350 acres.
Soil Thin, dry, neutral.
Climate Sheltered and protected. Hot and dry in the summer.
Points of interest The ornamental potager steals the show from July to September, but Mrs Child's Flower Garden is a tulip-filled treat in May, and the American borders and newly planted Winter Garden are also worth a look.

Learning to dance

At first glance the elaborate potager garden at Osterley Park appears to be a chaotic mix of riotous colour, but art not chance has shaped this beautifully choreographed ensemble of vegetables and flowering plants

WORDS **JOJO TULLOH** PHOTOGRAPHS **RACHEL WARNE**

Osterley Park was built to impress and it still does. This magnificent 18th-century pleasure palace on the outskirts of west London was a decades-long project for architect Robert Adam. In 1761 Adam was commissioned to build a new home for the wealthy Child family on the site of an existing Tudor manor house. The house features famously lavish interiors but originally the gardens were more than equal to this splendour, with elaborate plantings schemes, a lake, an exquisite small temple and a garden conservatory filled with tender and exotic plants.

A National Trust property since 1949, Osterley's grounds have in recent decades functioned as a public park open to all with a corresponding drop in the quality of the gardens. Six years of extremely hard work overseen by head gardener Andy Eddy have transformed Osterley's gardens. This 350-acre (35 of which constitute the main garden) estate has gone from a place in which 'paths and lawns' dominated to one that features elaborate flower gardens, 'American borders' and a conservatory filled with the sort of tender plants that were popular when the house was built (lemon and olive trees, *Geranium maderense* and two magnificent agaves). Added to this there are extensive picking beds of 18th-century flowers used for display in the house, a newly planted Winter Garden and the crowning glory: an over-the-top ornamental potager.

While he acknowledges the enormity of the challenge he undertook, Andy Eddy still calls this job his "dream come true". Andy, his partner and a blind Jack Russell called Jack share a cottage at the end of a 16th-century stable block. Built in 1560 it has a tiny back garden with a gate leading directly into the walled garden that contains the potager. This was once a nursery where trees and hedging plants were grown for the estate. Four years ago Andy noticed the shadow of four beds grassed over after the 'Dig for Victory' campaign of the Second World War. Under his direction these were replanted for late season interest with a mixture of flowering plants and vegetables.

In contrast to the other gardens at Osterley these beds have an air of mischief and frivolity about them. The wooden obelisks – painted a tasteful National Trust dark green in Mrs Child's Flower Garden – are bright canary yellow in the potager. This is Andy's chance to kick up his horticultural heels and dance a jig. The beds are planted in pairs, in the centre of one stacked hay bales create a 'ziggurat' of gourds, with the likes of pumpkin 'Atlantic Giant' and an heirloom cultivar of squash, 'Marina di Chioggia', planted in holes filled with rich compost.

The colours are hot and in your face, with bright yellow sunflowers, the glowing reds of the Mexican sunflower *Tithonia rotundifolia* 'Torch' and the statuesque, orange-topped *Leonotis nepetifolia* var. *nepetifolia* 'Staircase', alongside bright pink globes of *Cleome hassleriana* and the hanging red blooms of the vine-like *Eccremocarpus scaber* 'Tresco Designer Mix' (Tresco Series). There are dahlias and zinnias, and standing tall are sunflowers 'Velvet Queen' and *Helianthus debilis* 'Italian White'. Every plant seems to be calling out, ▷

Top left Swathes of green and deep purple are broken up by the hot orange blooms of Mexican sunflower *Tithonia rotundifolia* 'Torch'.

Bottom left Hazel wigwams and bright yellow obelisks add height and interest to the potager's densely planted beds.

Bottom middle Cutting beds provide the appropriate 18th-century blooms for the flower arrangements in the main house.

Bottom right A circular bench provides a welcome resting place from which to enjoy the potager's profusion of colour.

Colourful late-season chards and gourds displayed at the entrance hint at the abundance in the potager.

▷ shouting for attention but somehow the effect is of unity not discord.

With its 'pagodas' of lettuces, bolted and setting seed, scrambling gourds and beds filled to bursting point, this potager is abundant to the point of chaos, but make no mistake there is rigour, discipline and expertise behind it. Andy trained at Kew and then moved to Sissinghurst where he learned a lot (not least, ruthless efficiency in the polytunnel) from Sibylle Kreutzberger and the late Pam Schwerdt (both by then nearing retirement), who had originally been hired by Vita Sackville-West.

Andy may plant to shock but his ability to let go with such glorious abandon is backed by long years of training. It brings to mind some lines from the 18th-century poet Alexander Pope:

> ***True ease in writing comes***
> ***from art, not chance,***
> ***As those move easiest who***
> ***have learned to dance.***

Pope was writing about his own craft, but replace writing with gardening and you have this dazzling garden in a couplet. ◻

USEFUL INFORMATION

Osterley Park and House, Jersey Road,
Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4RD.
Tel 020 8232 5050.
Website www.nationaltrust.org.uk/osterley-park
Open All year, see website for times.

8 Late-season favourites

1 Deep reds come from red orach, *Ricinus communis* 'New Zealand Black' and *Amaranthus cruentus* 'Oeschberg' (pictured here contrasting with the cool green leaves and white blooms of *Nicotiana sylvestris* AGM*).

2 The beds feature 'drums' of sunflowers and dark-purple orach. To make these Andy draws wide circles in the soil in May and fills them with seeds. Seen here is *Helianthus* 'Lemon Queen'.

3 Colourful vegetables include purple cabbages, kale 'Redbor' and purple-headed cauliflowers. There is also chard, both rhubarb (pictured) and rainbow hued.

4 Andy has created a ziggurat-style feature using straw bales over which clamber a colourful mix of edible and ornamental gourds.

5 Bright exotic annuals include the Mexican sunflower *Tithonia rotundifolia* 'Torch', *Eccremocarpus scaber 'Tresco Designer Mix' (Tresco Series)*, towering *Leonotis nepetifolia* var. *nepetifolia* 'Staircase' and the *Cleome hassleriana* (pictured here).

6 These flame-tipped *Ipomoea lobata* (Spanish flag) are left to scramble up wigwams made from hazel coppiced from the estate. Other annual climbers, such as *Cobaea scandens* (cup and saucer vine) and sky-blue morning glory, add to the riot of colour.

7 The bright orange blooms and ferny leaves of the Californian poppy *Eschscholzia californica* provide ground-level interest, usefully filling gaps between the vegetables.

8 There are bright climbing beans of every colour – purple 'Cosse Violette', green runner bean 'Painted Lady' and splotched pink and white 'Borlotto Lingua di Fuoco'.

*Holds an Award of Garden merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

7 STEFFEN HAUSER / BOTANIKFOTO / ALAMY

Late-summer glow

Bring a bit of sparkle to your borders with these colourful late-season performers

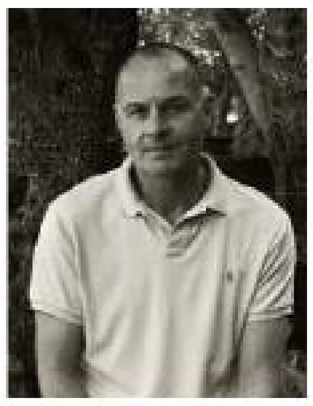
WORDS **MARK STRAVER**

In brief

What A mix of herbaceous plants and grasses that provide rich colour for late summer and beyond.
Origins Mixed.
Season Summer to mid September.
Size From small compact flowering plants to tall bushy grasses.
Conditions Varies according to plant species.

ACHILLEA 'TERRACOTTA'
Fades gracefully with age producing delightful multi-toned platters that hover over mounds of feathery grey-green leaves throughout late summer. 90cm. RHS H4, USDA 3a-9b[†].

ANDREW LAWSON / THE GARDEN COLLECTION. PORTRAIT BY CHARLIE HOPKINSON



Mark Straver comes from a long line of nurserymen and is co-founder and director of the Hampshire-based Hortus Loci (wholesale plant nursery) and Whitewater Plant Centre (retail)

After the frenetic early-season plants have jostled for attention, a serene calmness descends, and majestic late-flowering plants display their wares. With such an array of late-summer flowers available, it is a wonder why many borders run out of steam by midsummer. The answer lies in the way most gardens are put together. The Easter eagerness to buy inevitably leads to borders dominated by late-spring and early summer flowers, with token seasonal favourites providing interest at other times. This is a shame, since late-summer flowers have a great deal to offer gardens of all sizes.

Late-summer evening light modifies colour and form beyond recognition. Rustling grasses become shimmering waterfalls of golden threads, while funnel-shaped *Crocosmia* x *crocosmiiflora* 'Solfatare' flowers dart like flying fish between plateaus of *Achillea* 'Terracotta' and *A.* 'Walther Funcke' in the evening glow. Suddenly flat, washed-out borders, bleached by the summer sun, reveal new-found depth, coming alive with subtle hues and shades that were entirely imperceptible before. Shadows, once black as coal, now reveal hints of darkest brown and midnight purple tones.

At this time of year, changes in light intensity and wavelength cause this magical metamorphosis, increasing the eye's ability to appreciate the vast palette on offer. At sunrise and sunset, the low sun produces a diffuse light that highlights yellows, reds and oranges. During the middle of the day the light is stronger, with more blue and violet, so these colours catch the eye when the sun is high. By the end of summer, this blue period is a brief interlude, with the day dominated by the golden afterglow.

It makes sense, then, to choose flowers that make the most of late summer's prevailing light. Simmering reds, glowing oranges and golden yellows will sing out, purples add a melancholy undertone, while lengthening shadows enhance displays of statuesque plants and textured foliage. ▷

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
[†] Hardiness ratings given where available.

▷ Flowers that can be relied upon to perform on the late-summer stage fall into three groups: the 'early starters', which appear in Act 1 and don't give up; the 'summer stalwarts' that demand attention during Act 2, then fade gracefully; and the 'show-stoppers', which hit their peak during Act 3. Combining plants from all three groups creates a seamless succession of colour with an explosive big-bang finale.

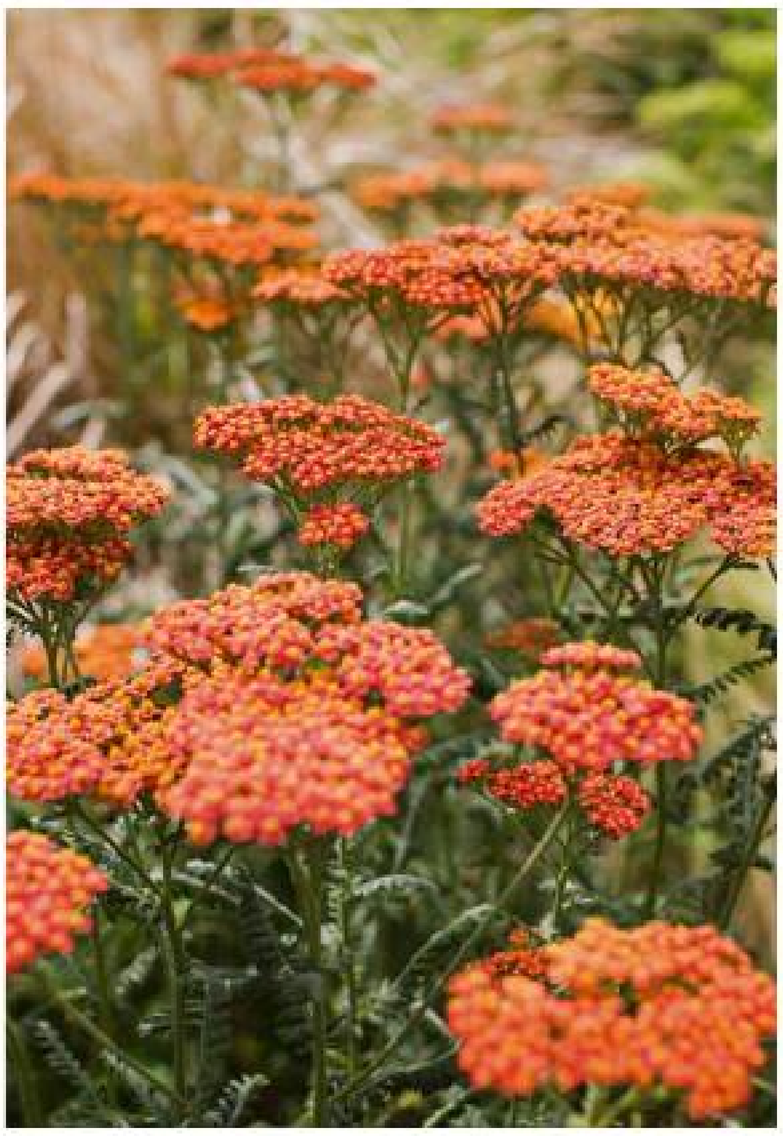
Achilleas tick all boxes, blooming from early summer until early autumn. Earth tones of *A.* 'Terracotta' and the yellow-eyed, brick-red heads of *A.* 'Walther Funcke' mix well with frothy clumping grasses, like emerald *Hakonechloa macra,* which is topped by foaming lime-green spikelets. The charming red-stemmed, mauve-pink flowers of *Origanum laevigatum* 'Herrenhausen' shouldn't be overlooked for the bonus of purple autumn tints.

By midsummer the distinctive bulb-headed spikes of *Kniphofia* 'Bees' Lemon' provide border highlights, while the single-daisy blooms of *Rudbeckia laciniata* 'Herbstsonne' shine out in the fading light. Most crocosmias look fantastic at this time of the year, but I've chosen diminutive *C.* x *crocosmiiflora* 'Solfatare' for its pale apricot-yellow, funnel-shaped flowers, which emerge on arching stems from sheathes of bronzed, strap-shaped leaves.

Brooding purples always have more impact towards the end of the summer. Irresistible *Penstemon* 'Raven' offers real staying power, producing its large spikes of tubular, purple-black flowers all summer. Sumptuous deep-purple *Sedum* 'José Aubergine' will add last-minute drama at the front of a border as domed heads of tiny, starry, dusky-pink flowers emerge. To add air and grace, *Actaea simplex* 'Pink Spike' is hard to beat with deeply divided, bronze-purple foliage and fragrant, soft-pink bottlebrush flowers.

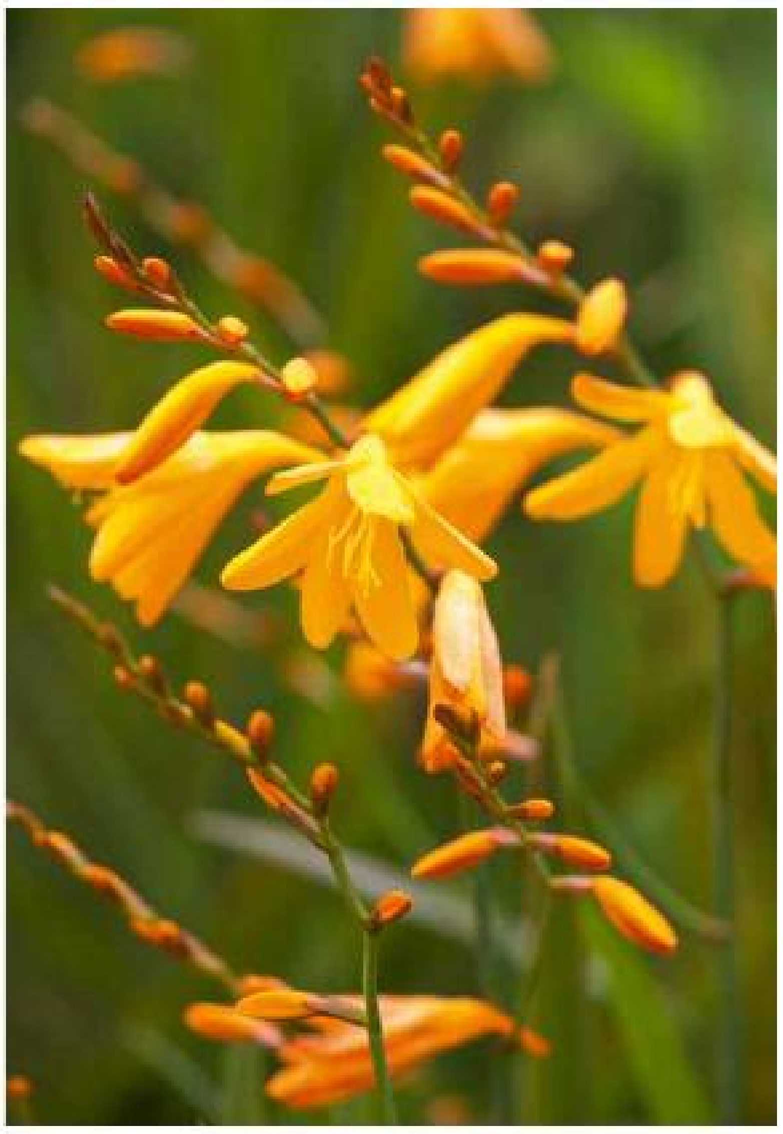
But it's the grasses that really sparkle at this time: *Molinia caerulea* 'Dark Defender' with persistent deep-purple spikelets on erect yellow stems; erect clumps of arching *Panicum virgatum* 'Rehbraun' whose leaves turn rich purple-red; and *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Purpurascens' which becomes a beacon of orange-red during autumn, topped by pink-tinged feathery flower plumes that mature to silvery-white. □

• Mark's pick of late summer stars continues over the next six pages.



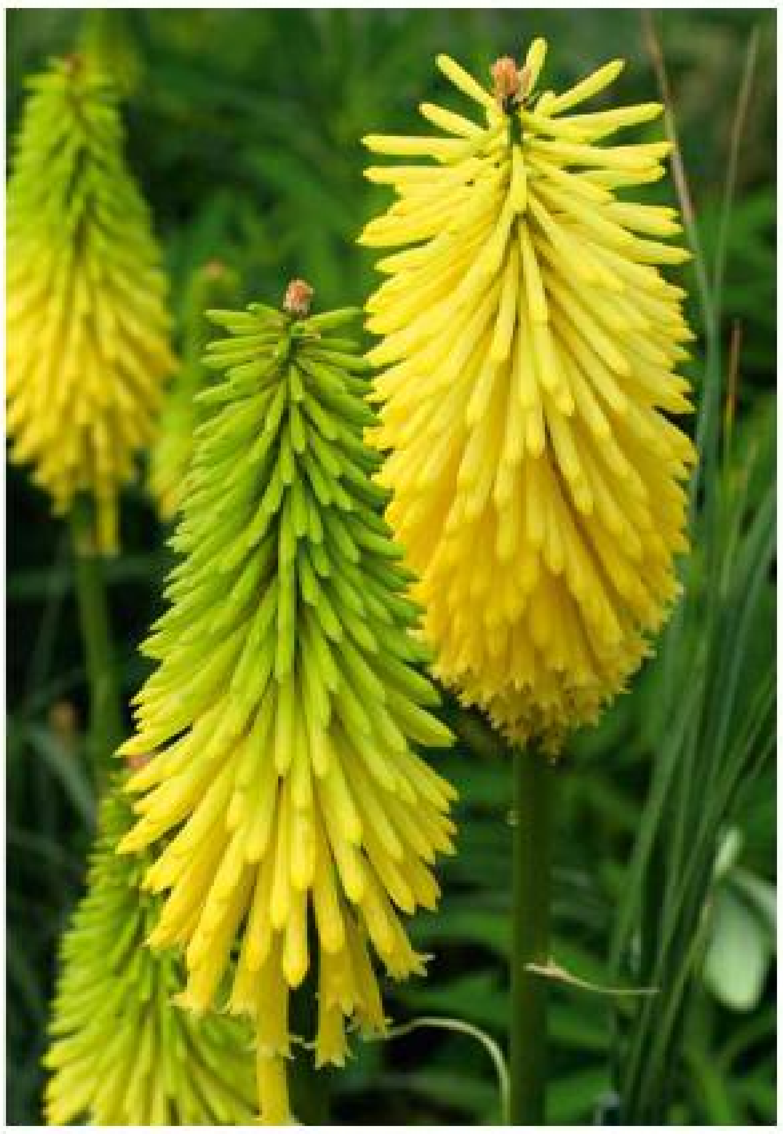
***ACHILLEA* 'WALTHER FUNCKE'**

Produces masses of yellow-eyed, brick-red flower platters, from midsummer onwards, that fade to creamy yellow with age. 60cm. RHS H4, USDA 3a-9b.



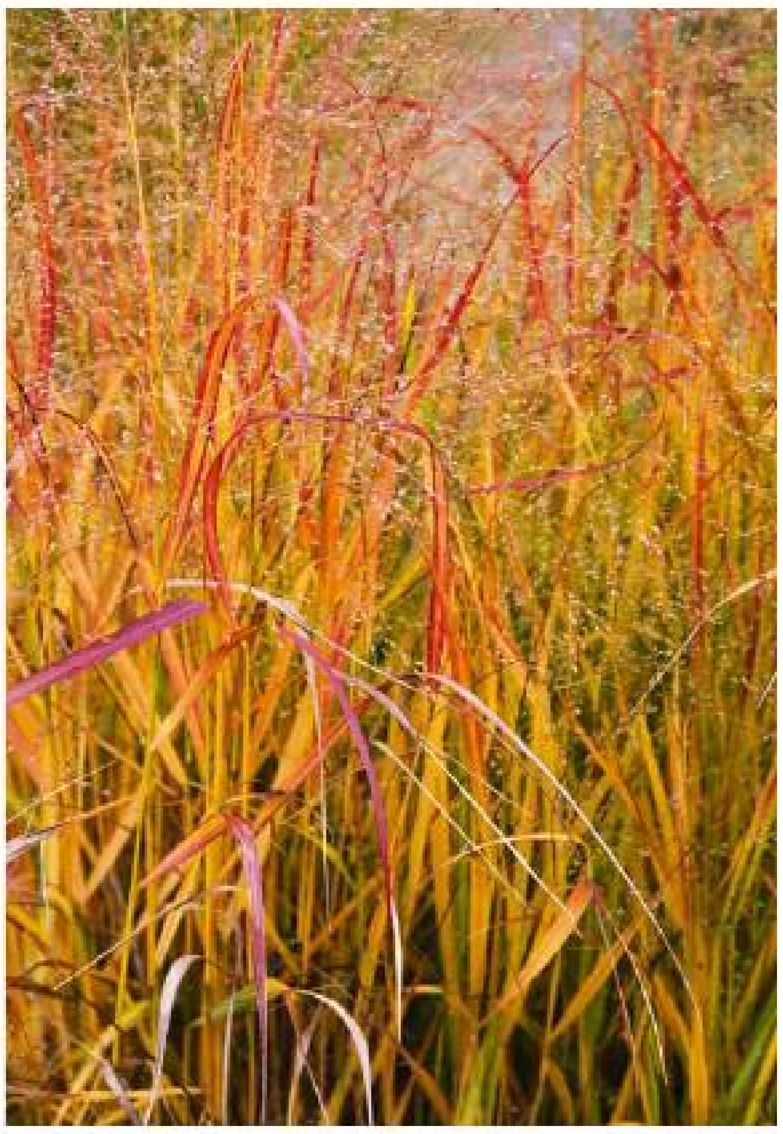
***CROCOSMIA* X *CROCOSMIIFLORA* 'SOLFATARE'**

From late summer sprays of pale apricot-yellow, funnel-shaped flowers emerge from sheathes of bronzed, strap-shaped leaves. 90cm. USDA 5a-9b.



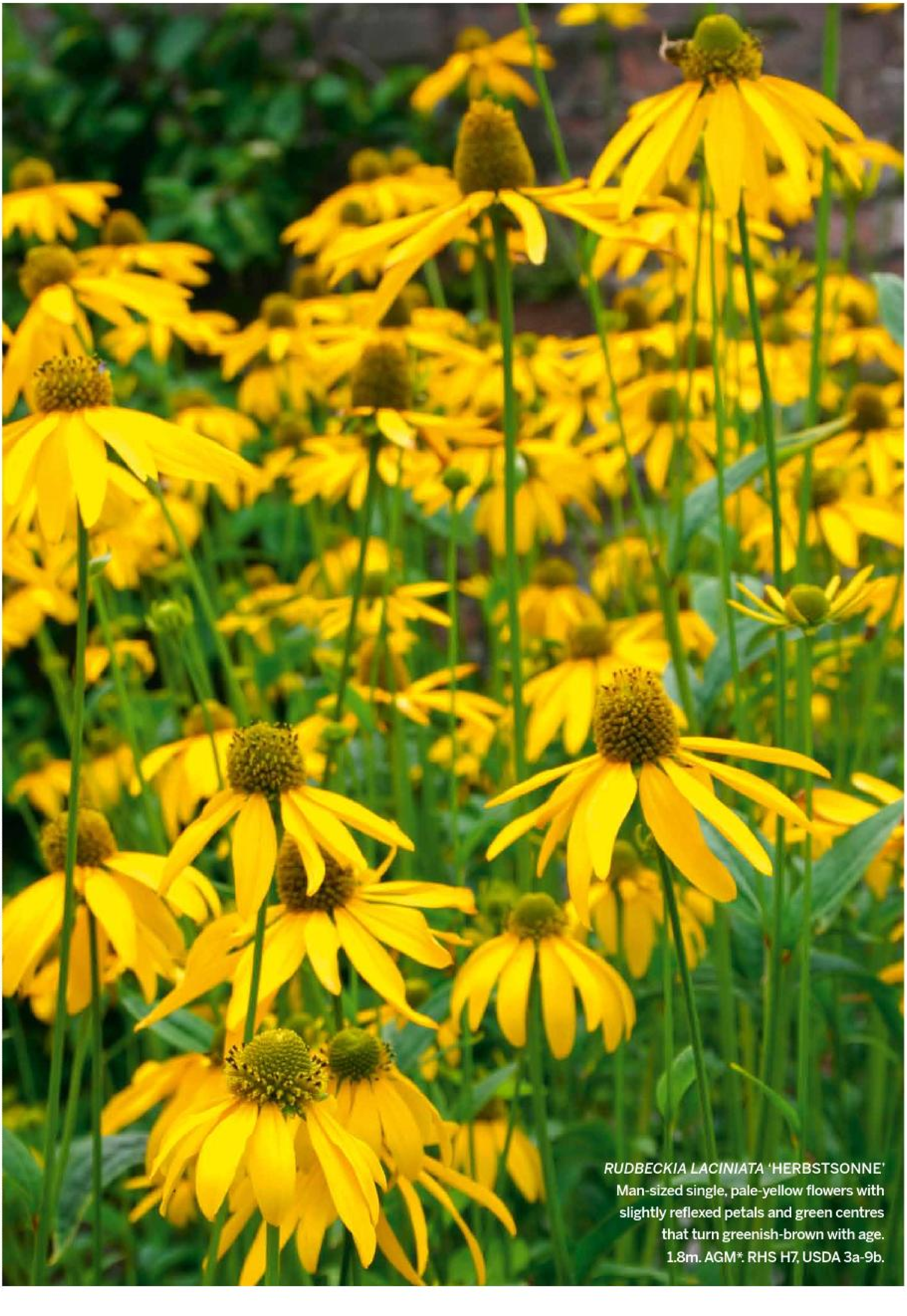
***KNIPHOFIA* 'BEES' LEMON'**

Knee-high, bulb-headed spikes of lemon-yellow flowers open from green buds throughout late summer. 60cm. USDA 5b-9b.



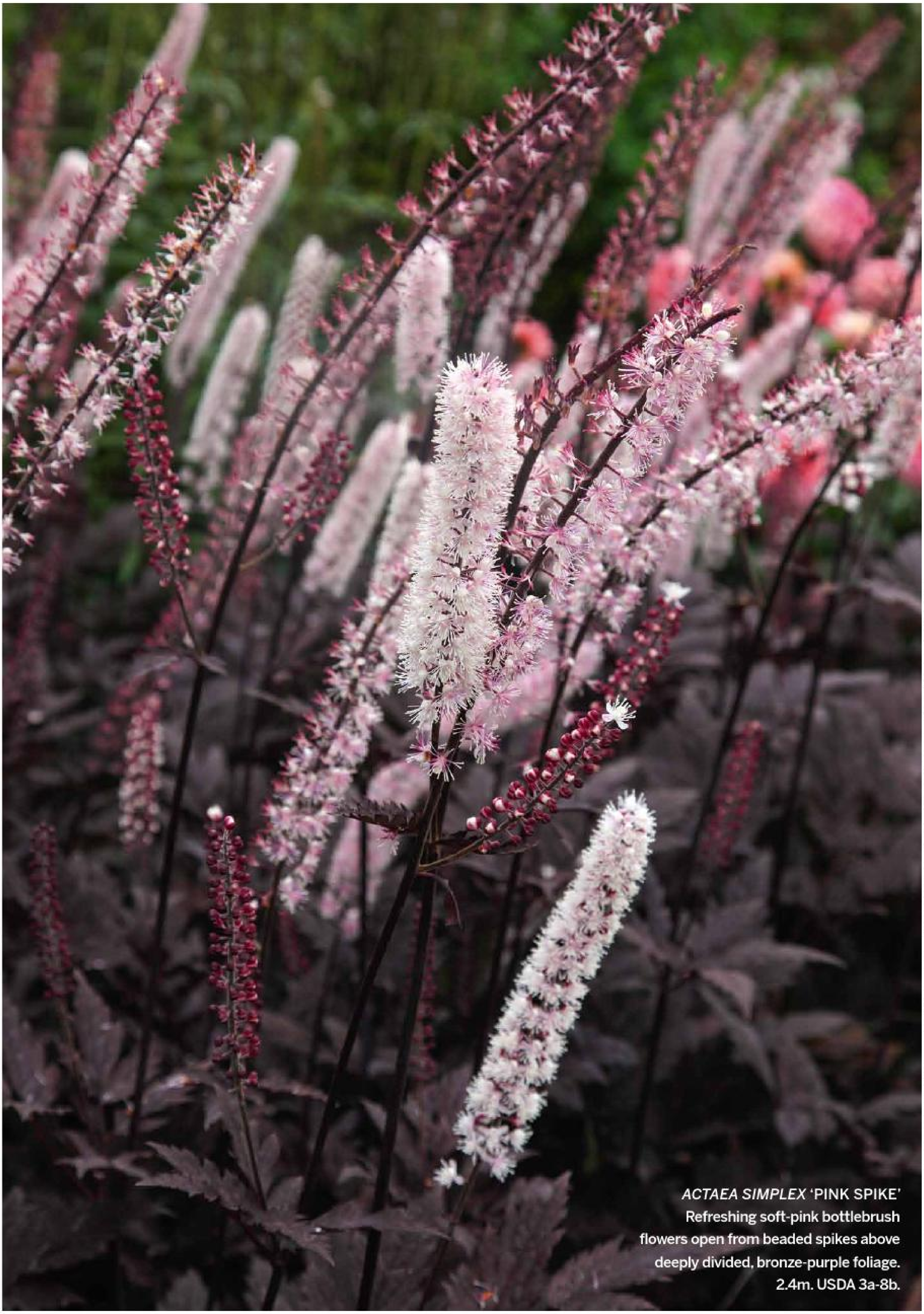
***PANICUM VIRGATUM* 'REHBRAUN'**

Erect clumps of arching green leaves, turn rich purplish-red as summer turns to autumn, topped by a haze of purplish-green spikelets. 90cm. USDA 5a-9b.



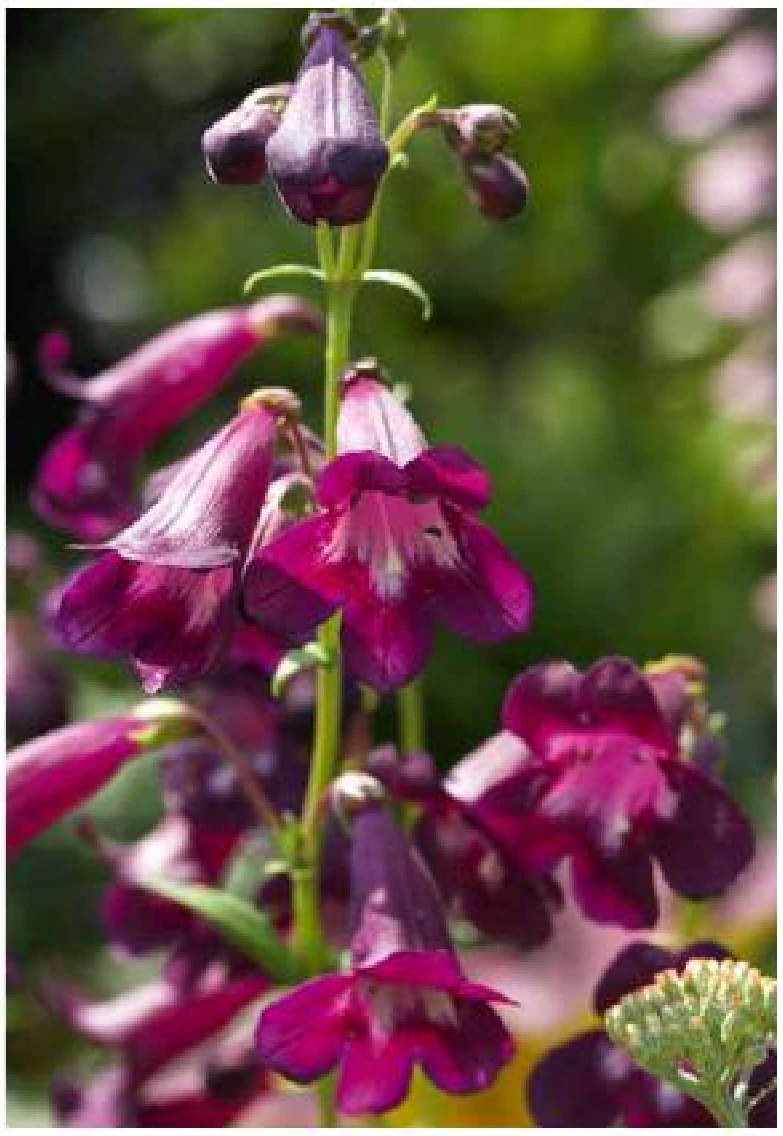
***RUDBECKIA LACINIATA* 'HERBSTSONNE'**
Man-sized single, pale-yellow flowers with slightly reflexed petals and green centres that turn greenish-brown with age. 1.8m. AGM*. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

PERNILLA BERGDAHL / GETTY; GAP PHOTOS; MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES; VICTORIA FIRMSTON / GAP PHOTOS; ASPERRA IMAGES / ALAMY

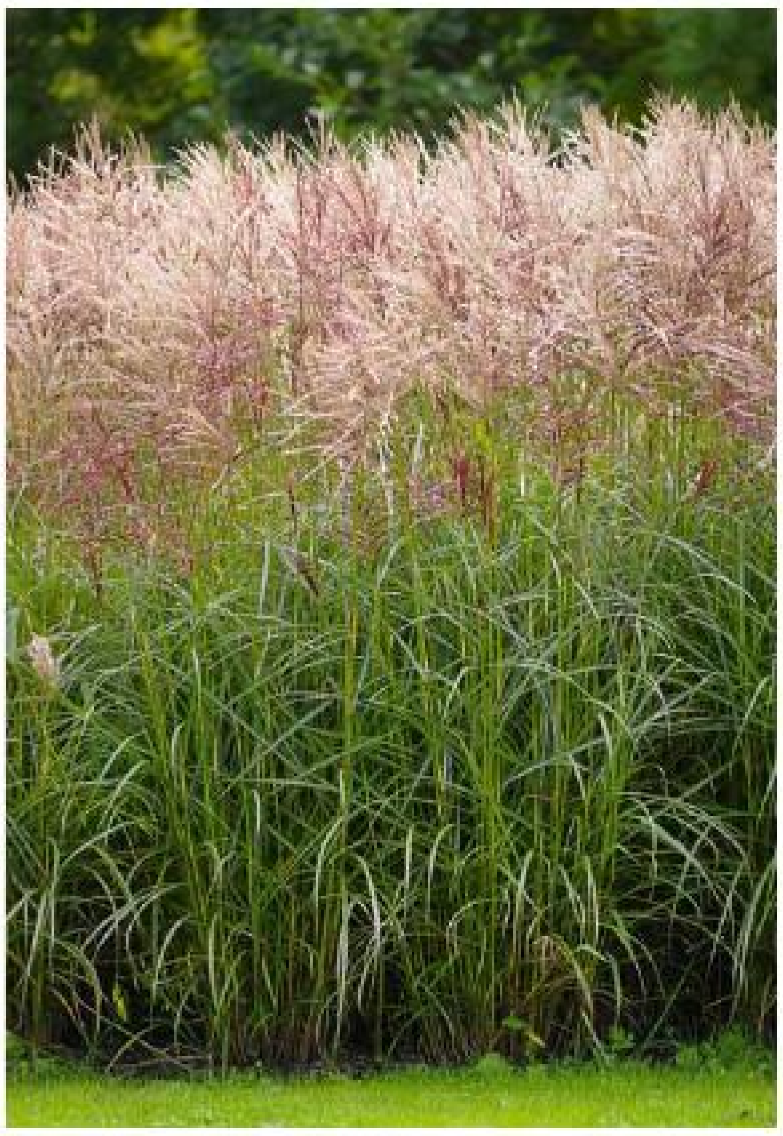


***ACTAEA SIMPLEX* 'PINK SPIKE'**
Refreshing soft-pink bottlebrush flowers open from beaded spikes above deeply divided, bronze-purple foliage. 2.4m. USDA 3a-8b.

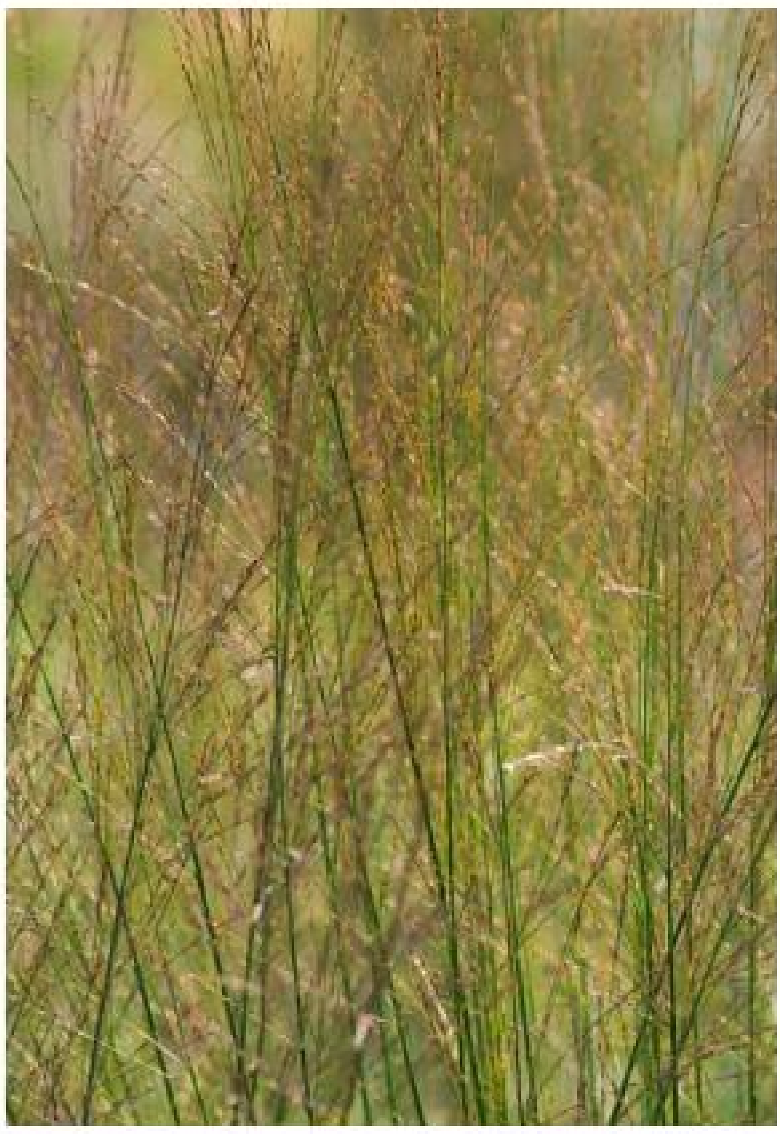
MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / THEGARDENCOLLECTION, NICHOLAS APPLEBY / GARDENWORLD IMAGES, CORA NIELE / GETTY, FLOWERPHOTOS / ALAMY, TOMMY TONSBERG / GAP PHOTOS



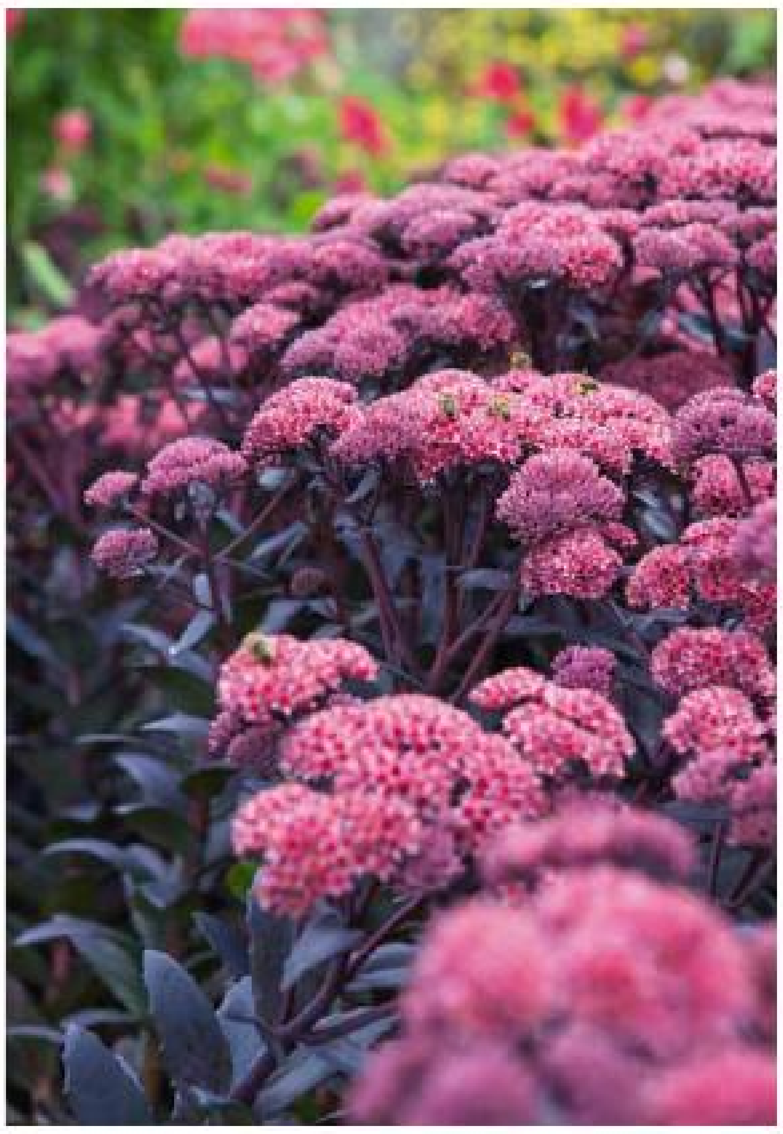
PENSTEMON **'RAVEN'**
Sumptuous spikes of small, tubular, purple-black flowers, with white throats streaked with reddish-purple are a summer-long treat. 90cm. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 7a-9b.



MISCANTHUS **'PURPURASCENS'**
Pink-tinged feathery flower-plumes mature to silvery-white over slender, arching purplish-green leaves that turn orange-red after warm summers. 1.2m. USDA 5a-9b.



MOLINIA CAERULEA **SUBSP.** ***ARUNDINACEA*** **'TRANSPARENT'**
Wispy, see-through purple spikelets, maturing to gold, held above arching green ribbon leaves, that turn yellow in autumn. 1m.



SEDUM **'JOSÉ AUBERGINE'**
Domed heads of tiny, starry, dusky-pink flowers emerge from pillows of succulent, deep-purple foliage during late summer. Surely one of the best. 50cm.

Extending the flowering season

- There are techniques you can use to extend the flowering season with herbaceous perennials and other repeat-flowering plants. Perhaps the best known is the so-called 'Chelsea-chop' carried out during late May, coinciding with the Chelsea Flower Show. It's a method of manipulating the flowering season (as well as controlling the size) of a range of perennials that includes *Coreopsis*, *Echinacea*, *Helenium*, *Phlox*, *Rudbeckia* and *Sedum*, to spread the flowering period throughout late summer and into autumn. In essence, you are removing the existing developing terminal flower buds, to encourage buds to form on sideshoots lower down, which will take longer to come into bloom.

Cut back clumps by about half, using secateurs or garden shears before they start flowering. As a rule of thumb, the closer you cut back plants to their natural flowering time, the longer the delay incurred. The technique may sound brutal, but it works. By cutting back, say, one-in-three plants in a perennial border, you can get continuous flowering over several months, instead of a short burst that lasts for only a few weeks. In a small garden, you can achieve the same trick on a single clump.

If you cut back the stems on the front half of the clump, the taller flowers at the back will bloom as normal, followed by a flush of shorter, smaller flowers at the front.

- Keeping plants young and vigorous can also have an effect on their flowering season. Herbaceous plants that respond well to regular division, such as *Achillea*, *Aconitum*, *Aster*, *Geum*, *Heuchera* and *Solidago*, can be encouraged to produce bigger and better displays that last longer by dividing every few years. Try taking cuttings in autumn to have young plants in flower earlier than the older plants that have remained outside over the winter months.
- Another traditional trick of the trade to encourage later flowering ▷

▷ involves cutting back certain repeat-flowering herbaceous plants to ground level after their first main flush of blooms start to fade. *Geum*, hardy geraniums, *Lamium*, *Nepeta* and violas all respond well to this treatment, although they will need watering and feeding after cutting back for the best results. Spike-forming perennials, such as *Aconitum*, *Digitalis* and *Lupinus*, can have their faded flower spikes cut back to a sideshoot lower down the stem, to encourage an encore of blooms later in the summer. I've found a timely application of chicken manure during late winter and again in late spring produces remarkable results, with some foliage displays actually looking better the second time around.

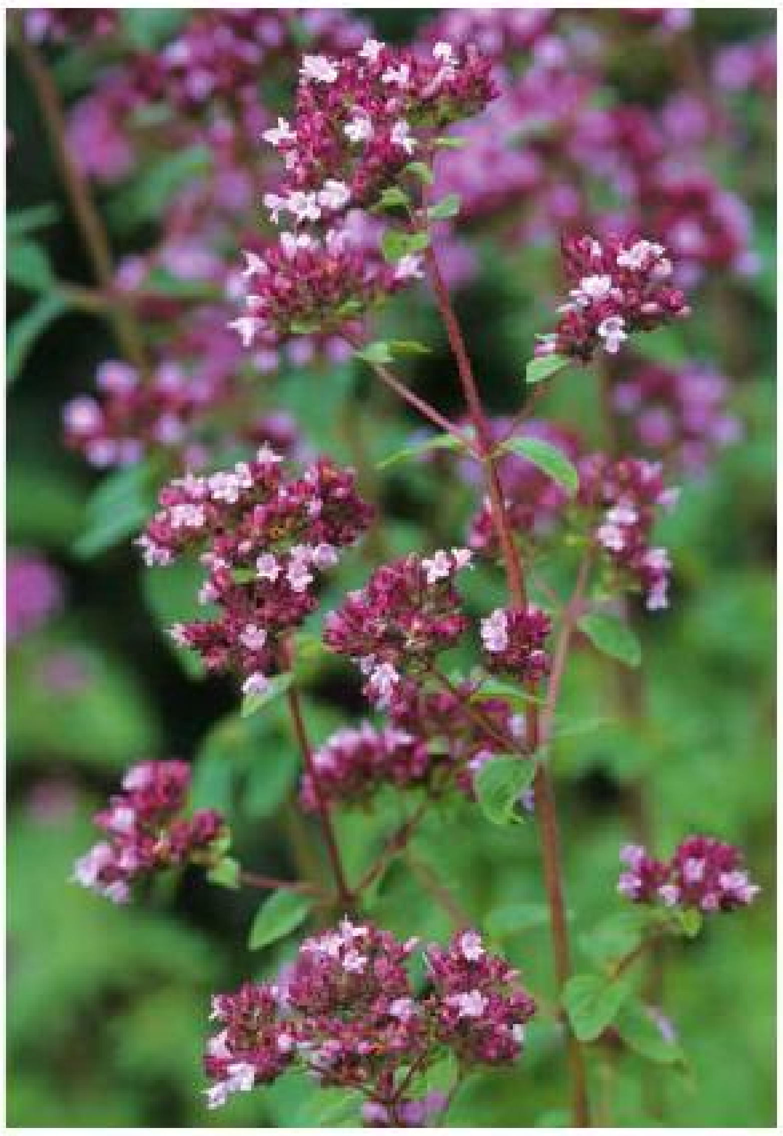
- Repeat-flowering border plants will respond well to having a stress-free life. For example, the flowering display of *Ageratum*, *Cosmos* and *Mimulus* will come to an abrupt halt if the soil is allowed to dry out, so keep such plants well-watered during dry spells. Mulching in spring will help retain moisture in the soil during the flowering season, encouraging drought-susceptible repeat-performers to flourish over a longer season. Most repeat-flowering perennials are hungry feeders and will bloom for an extended period if well fed throughout the season. Flowers that are naturally adapted to growing in poor soil conditions, such as *Eschscholzia*, are the exception to this rule as they bloom more freely on a starvation diet.

Where to buy and see

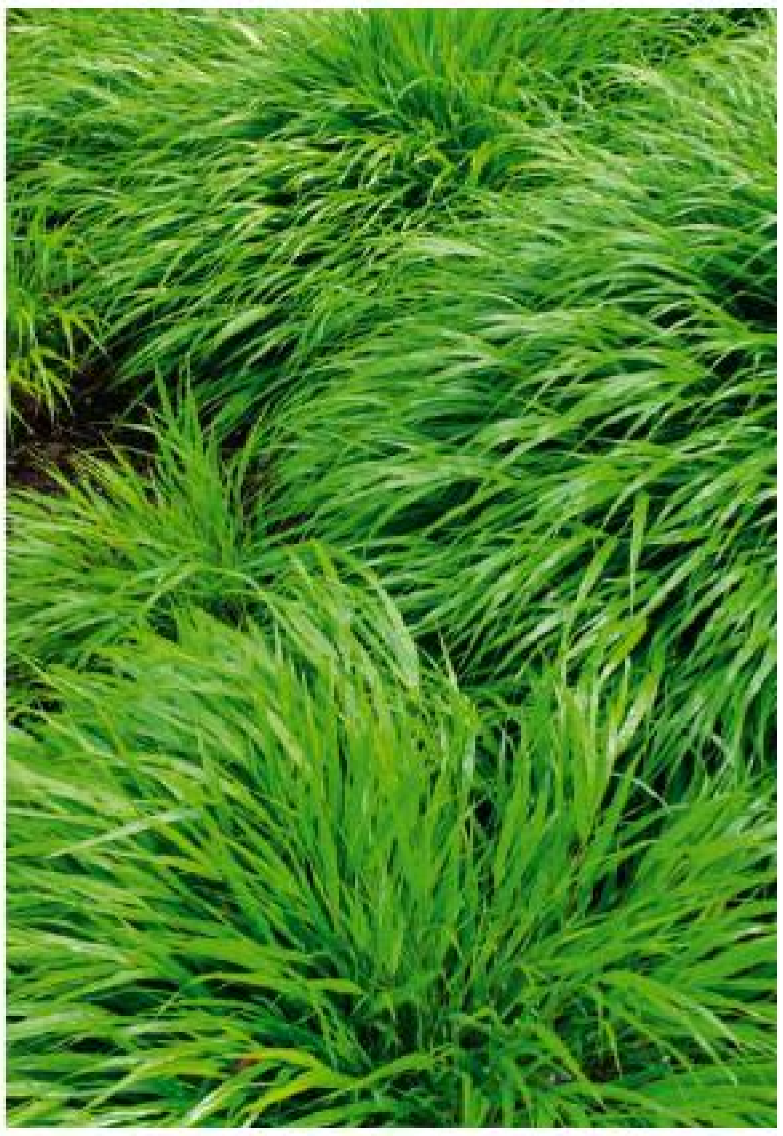
Beth Chatto Gardens
Elmstead Market
Colchester CO7 7DB.
Tel 01206 822007,
www.bethchatto.co.uk

Cotswold Garden Flowers
Sands Lane, Badsey, Evesham,
Worcestershire WR11 7EZ.
Tel 01386 833849, www.cgf.net

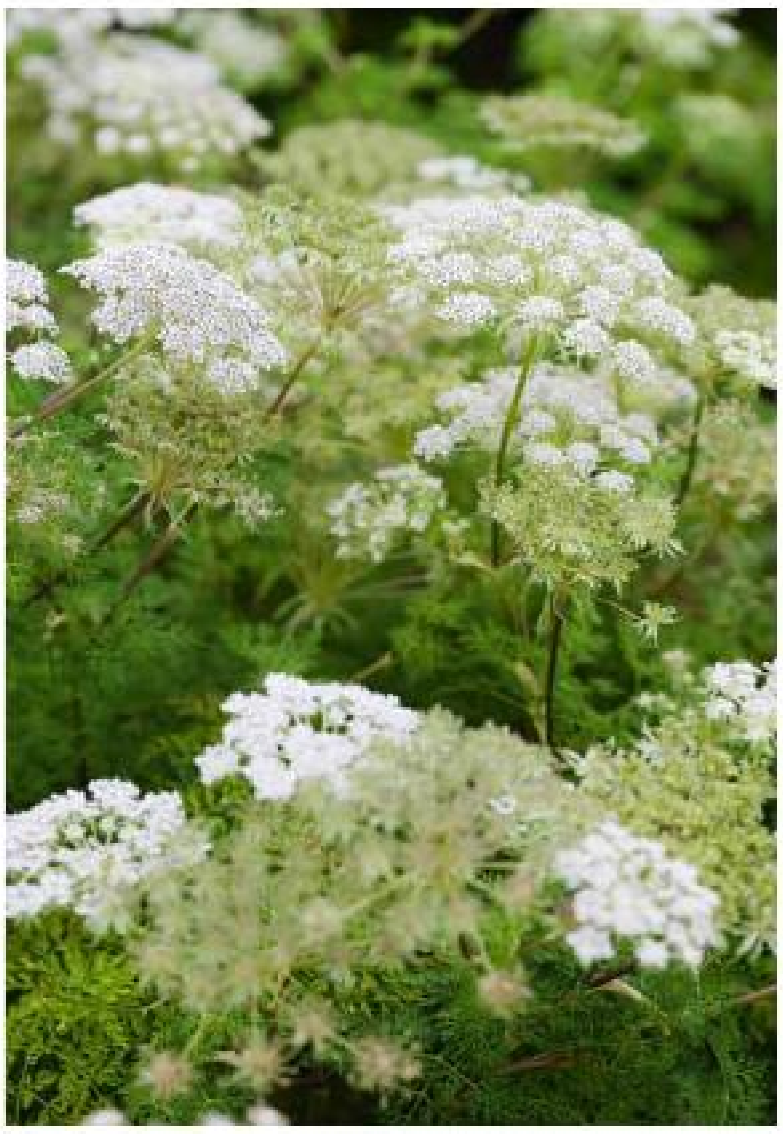
Whitewater Plant Centre
Hound Green, Hook,
Hampshire RG27 8LQ.
Tel 0118 932 6487,
www.whitewaterplantcentre.co.uk



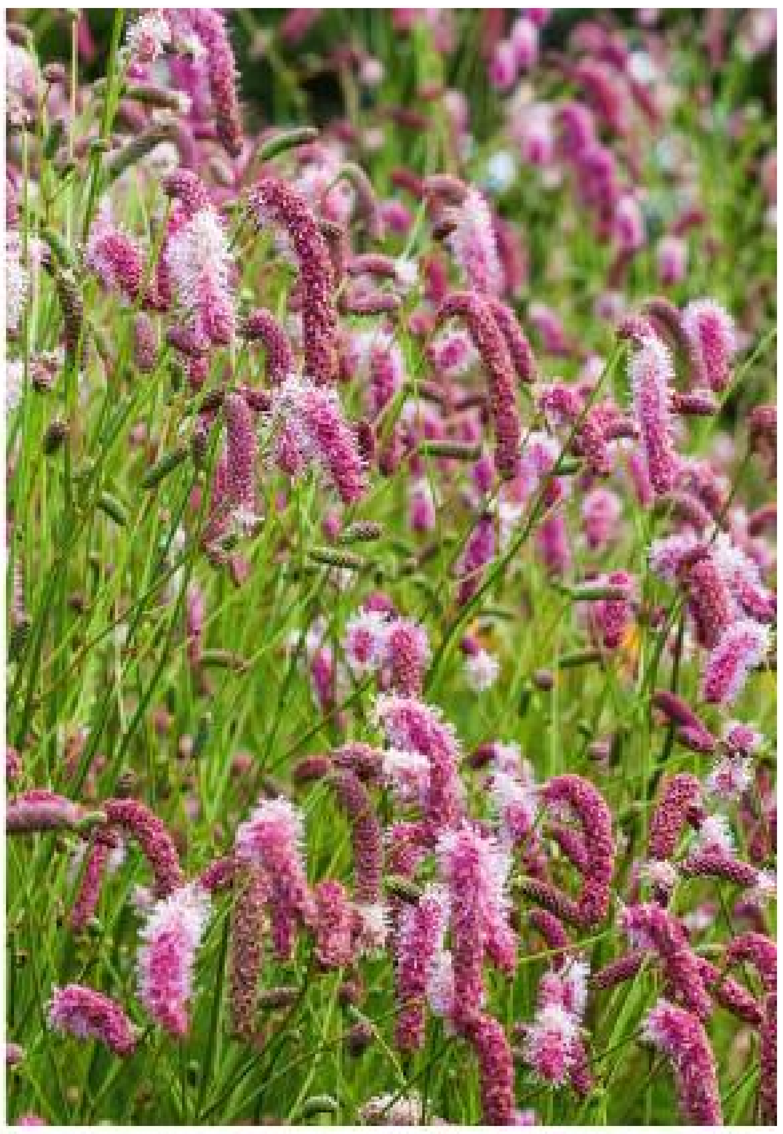
***ORIGANUM LAEVIGATUM* 'HERRENHAUSEN'**
A summer-long show of mauve-pink flowers on red stems, top purple-flushed green foliage that turns purple in autumn. 60cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 5a-10b.



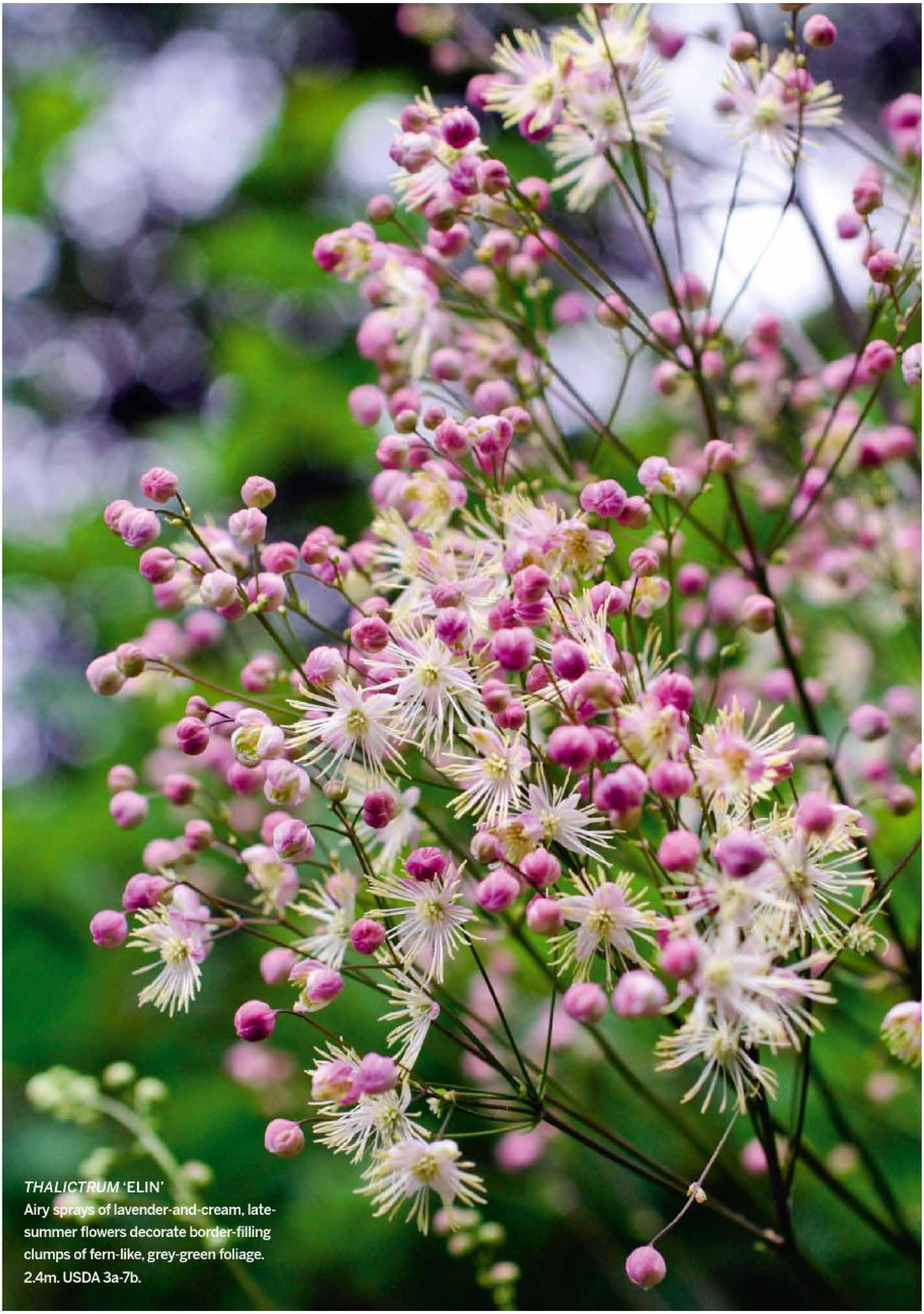
HAKONECHLOA MACRA
This Japanese forest grass has spreading mounds of glossy, emerald-green arching leaves that are topped by frothing sprays of lime-green spikelets. A great filler or feature. 90cm. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 5b-9b.



SELINUM WALLICHIANUM
Flattened lacy umbels of tiny pure-white, starry flowers shine out above ferny foliage on red-tinted stems from midsummer onwards. 1.8m. RHS H4, USDA 6b-10b.



***SANGUISORBA TENUIFOLIA* 'PINK ELEPHANT'**
Nodding reddish-pink oval tassel-like flowerheads top branched, upright wiry stems during late summer. 1.8m.



THALICTRUM **'ELIN'**
Airy sprays of lavender-and-cream, late-summer flowers decorate border-filling clumps of fern-like, grey-green foliage. 2.4m. USDA 3a-7b.

ANDREW LAWSON / THE GARDEN COLLECTION, STEFFEN HAUSER / BOTANIKFOTO / ALAMY, VICTORIA FIRMSTON / GAP PHOTOS, MARIANNE MAJERUS, MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / ALAMY

Sylvie and Patrick Quibel

Despite becoming gardeners relatively late in life, the owners of Le Jardin Plume have created one of Europe's most remarkable gardens

WORDS JOHN HOYLAND PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

However camera-shy you are, after you have visited their garden, Sylvie and Patrick Quibel will want to take a snapshot of you. "Part of the pleasure of making this garden is sharing it with other people," explains Sylvie. "If visitors like the garden we are not just happy but delighted. Taking their photograph is a reminder of the visit."

The thousands of photographs of smiling garden designers, gardeners and nurserymen who have visited the garden since it opened in 1997 is testament to the success of their Normandy garden, Le Jardin Plume. The garden's exuberantly embroidered planting schemes, extravagantly sculpted hedges and the calm formality of its orchard have made it one of Europe's pre-eminent modern gardens. The French government has classified it as a 'Jardin Remarquable' and it was the Garden Museum's Garden of the Year in 2008.

Like many people, Patrick and Sylvie discovered a passion for gardening in adulthood. Patrick remembers that as a child he was not allowed into his grandfather's garden. "I could walk along the paths but was forbidden to put a foot on to the soil. It was a mysterious, beautiful and dangerous place." Sylvie, who was brought up in rural Normandy, is a country girl: "My entire childhood was spent outside in the fields and lanes."

Patrick and Sylvie made their first garden as a young married couple in the late 1970s and were immediately excited by the idea of growing plants. "This was at a time in France when it was difficult to find interesting herbaceous perennials," says Patrick. "*Alchemilla mollis* was a rarity." But this was also the start of a gardening revival in France and the establishment of plant shows, such as at Saint-Jean de Beauregard, which introduced the Quibels to lots of new plants. "We discovered growers who had wonders that we now consider banal, and started to visit gardens and nurseries in Britain where we found even more extraordinary plants."

They admired the architecture and design of gardens but at that time what interested them most were the plants. By the early 1990s Sylvie decided that she wanted to turn her passion into her profession and so set up a nursery on a tiny piece of land at her parents' house. She grew many of the herbaceous perennials she had found on her travels and sold them in the local markets. Here she came across designer Mark Brown, who was to become an important influence in her and Patrick's careers. "He bought a dozen white aquilegias from me. Unheard of! French customers bought plants singly so I knew this was someone special."

A huge turning point in their lives came with a visit to the Netherlands in the early 1990s to see the gardens of Henk Gerritsen and Ton ter Linden. "Both gardens appeared revolutionary to us," says Patrick. "Gerritsen's wildness and the pointillist plantings of Ton ter Linden were inspiring. We came away knowing we wanted to make a garden." Sylvie adds: "A garden for us – a garden without constraints."

At the same time they were discovering formal Italian gardens and rediscovering the majesty of 18th-century French gardens, and were able to put their ideas into practice when they acquired a neglected farm with an old orchard. "Although we lived with the place to get a sense of the soil and light we knew there would be a strong sense of formality and immediately mowed the meadow into squares," says Patrick.

The gardens are imbued with the couple's wide knowledge of plants and eye for exciting plant combinations. "We are passionate about plants but we not plant collectors. We are not interested in having every geranium there is. What excites us is finding a plant that works in a specific situation," explains Patrick. "And we have never lost the thrill of discovering a new plant that fits perfectly into a planting scheme," adds Sylvie.

Sylvie and Patrick often finish each other's sentences or elaborate on each other's remarks. They insist that the garden was created and developed jointly. "This garden is a joint expression, a joint desire," explains Sylvie.

"There is a great pleasure in the garden's finished effect, but there is also great pleasure in doing the actual gardening," says Sylvie. "For 20 years we have had Sébastien Damiens working with us. This garden is our adventure but Sébastien has accompanied us from the beginning." Patrick agrees: "We create and we garden. It makes us very happy." □

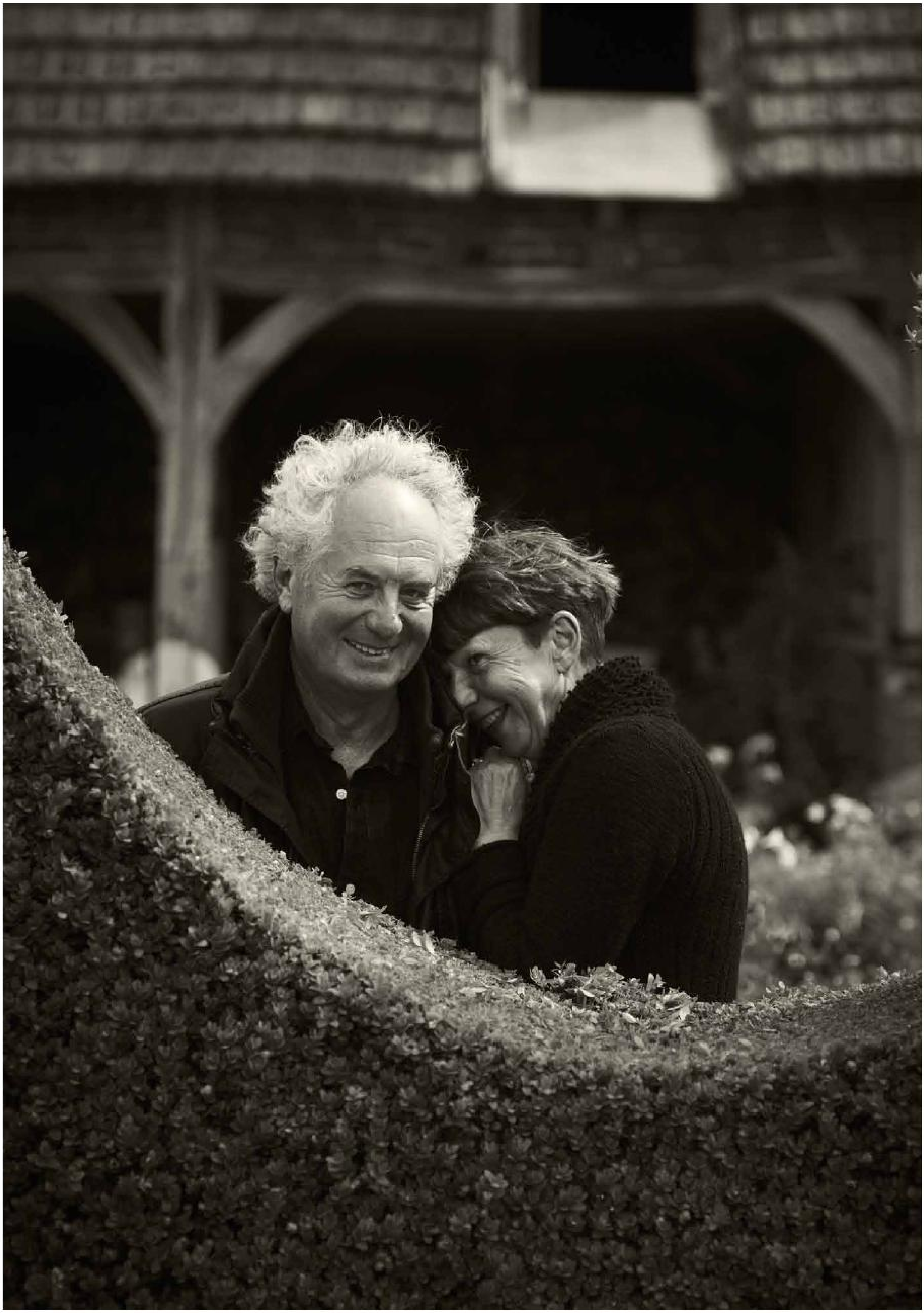
USEFUL INFORMATION

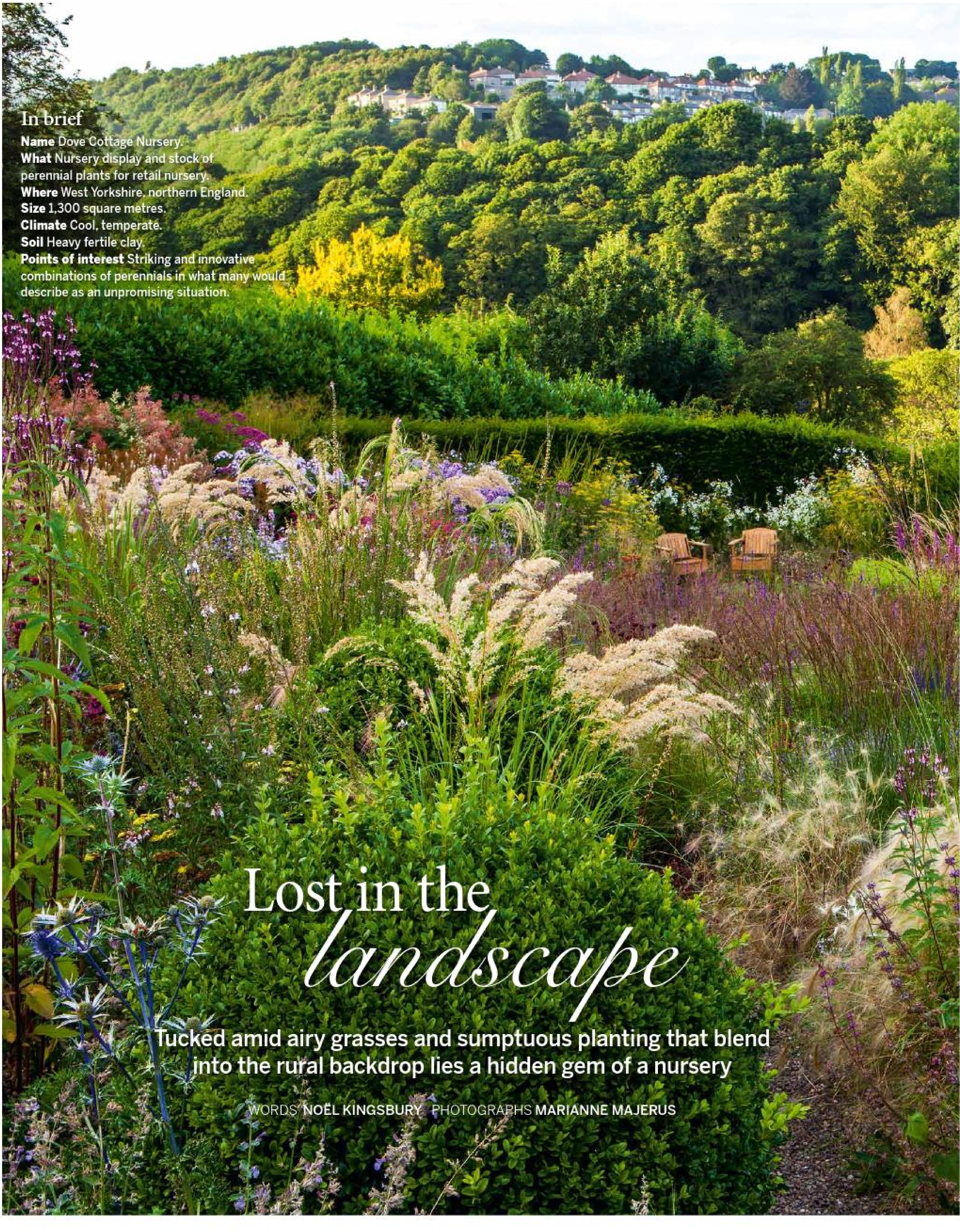
www.lejardinplume.com
Discover late-summer asters and grasses at Le Jardin Plume open days: 14-15 September, 10am-6pm.

NEXT MONTH

Alan Street of Avon Bulbs.

> *"If visitors like the garden we are not just happy but delighted"*





Lost in the *landscape*

Tucked amid airy grasses and sumptuous planting that blend into the rural backdrop lies a hidden gem of a nursery

WORDS **NOËL KINGSBURY** PHOTOGRAPHS **MARIANNE MAJERUS**

In brief

Name Dove Cottage Nursery.
What Nursery display and stock of perennial plants for retail nursery.
Where West Yorkshire, northern England.
Size 1,300 square metres.
Climate Cool, temperate.
Soil Heavy fertile clay.
Points of interest Striking and innovative combinations of perennials in what many would describe as an unpromising situation.

A stunningly colourful mix of grasses and perennials have created a private Eden amid the rolling hills of Yorkshire's beautiful West Riding.

A north-facing hillside in the north of England might strike many as being less than an ideal site for a garden of sun-loving perennials. However, what Stephen and Kim Rogers and their daughter Katie have achieved since they started the nursery and display garden at Dove Cottage in 1997, shows that pessimists need to think again. Given that recent expert opinion is suggesting that the British Isles may be in for a period of cool wet summers, gardens like this become increasingly important in helping us understand what kind of planting will work.

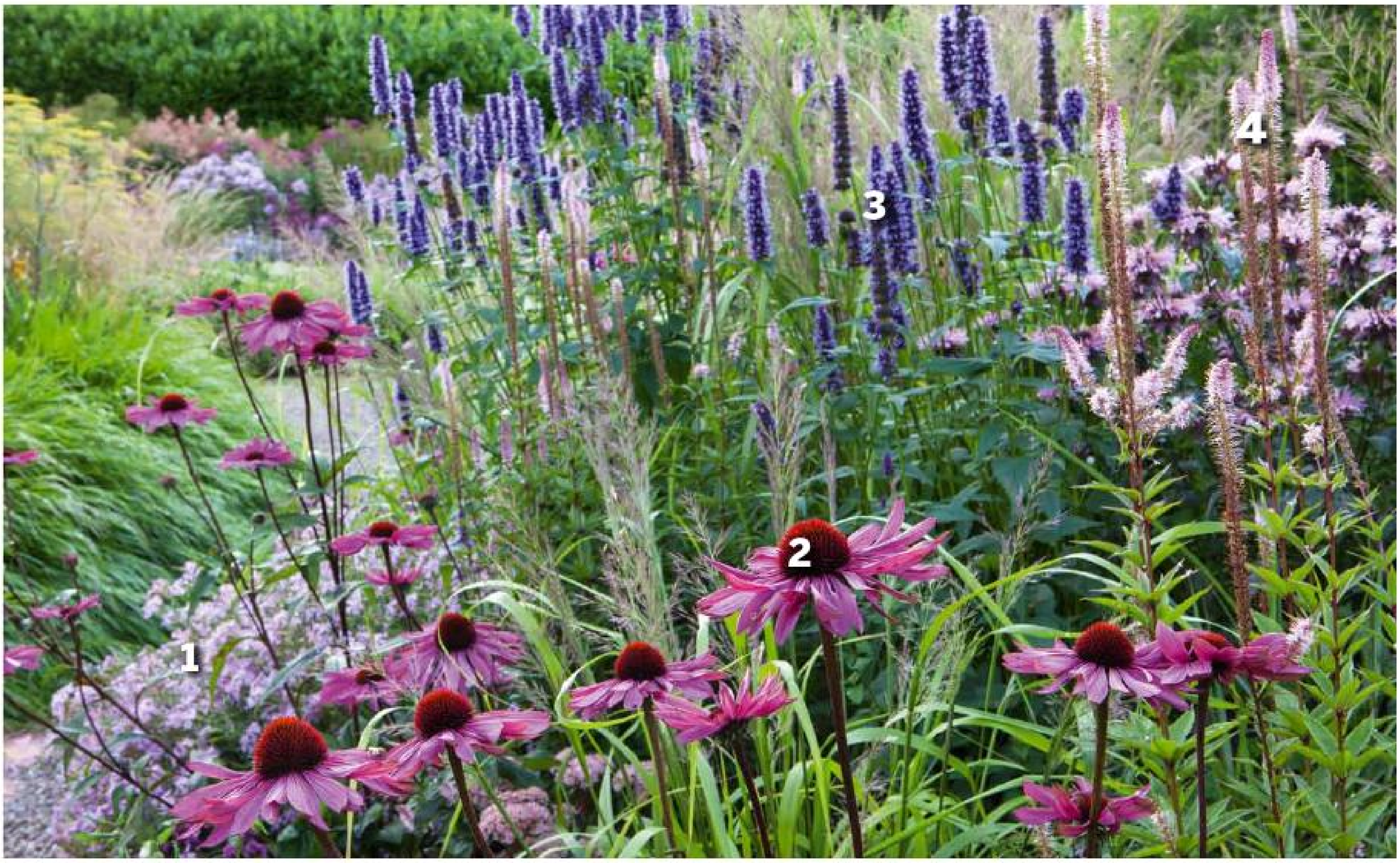
The garden here is primarily for displaying plants available in the nursery but its form and design could just as well be someone's private Eden. The nursery area is invisible behind a high yew hedge, cut with gentle curves that echo the heavily wooded hills, visible from the top of the garden; these undulations are picked up again by a box hedge lower down. Sloping gently, there is enough elevation to appreciate different views of the garden's planting. Repetition of plants is an important part of the design style here, Kim explains. "Our approach to planting uses just one or two grass varieties and a limited perennial selection, planted as single plants repeated through the area. This gives a softer effect than planting in blocks, with more opportunities for foliage, flower and seedheads to mingle."

The June display involves a lot of dark-leaved cultivars of *Actaea*, *Astrantia* and *Angelica*, interspersed with neat clumps of perennials bursting with promise of the summer to come. Later on, everything is much looser with heads of flowering perennials jostling for space. While pinks and purples are important earlier in the season, yellows have a leading role in late summer. With looser planting schemes, shapes are as important as colour: form gives the eye something to hang on to.

Having seen this combination of looseness and structure, it's not surprising to hear Stephen explain, "our inspiration was the year we discovered Hadspen garden, then Bury Court – the first Piet Oudolf-designed garden in Britain… when we saw this style of planting, that was it, we had to try it." Stephen and Kim have followed this up with frequent trips to the Netherlands, where they have bought plants from some of the most innovative Dutch perennial specialists, such as Hans Kramer at De Hessenhof (GARDENS ILLUSTRATED issue 189). They are making these plants available now to the rest of us. However Kim points out, "We can't make a living from Piet Oudolf plants, our profits come from hardy geraniums, violas and *Erigeron karvinskianus*." The best-selling plant here is *Viola cornuta*, of which there are around 20 cultivars available. "The smaller-flowered cultivars are the most reliable," says Stephen,

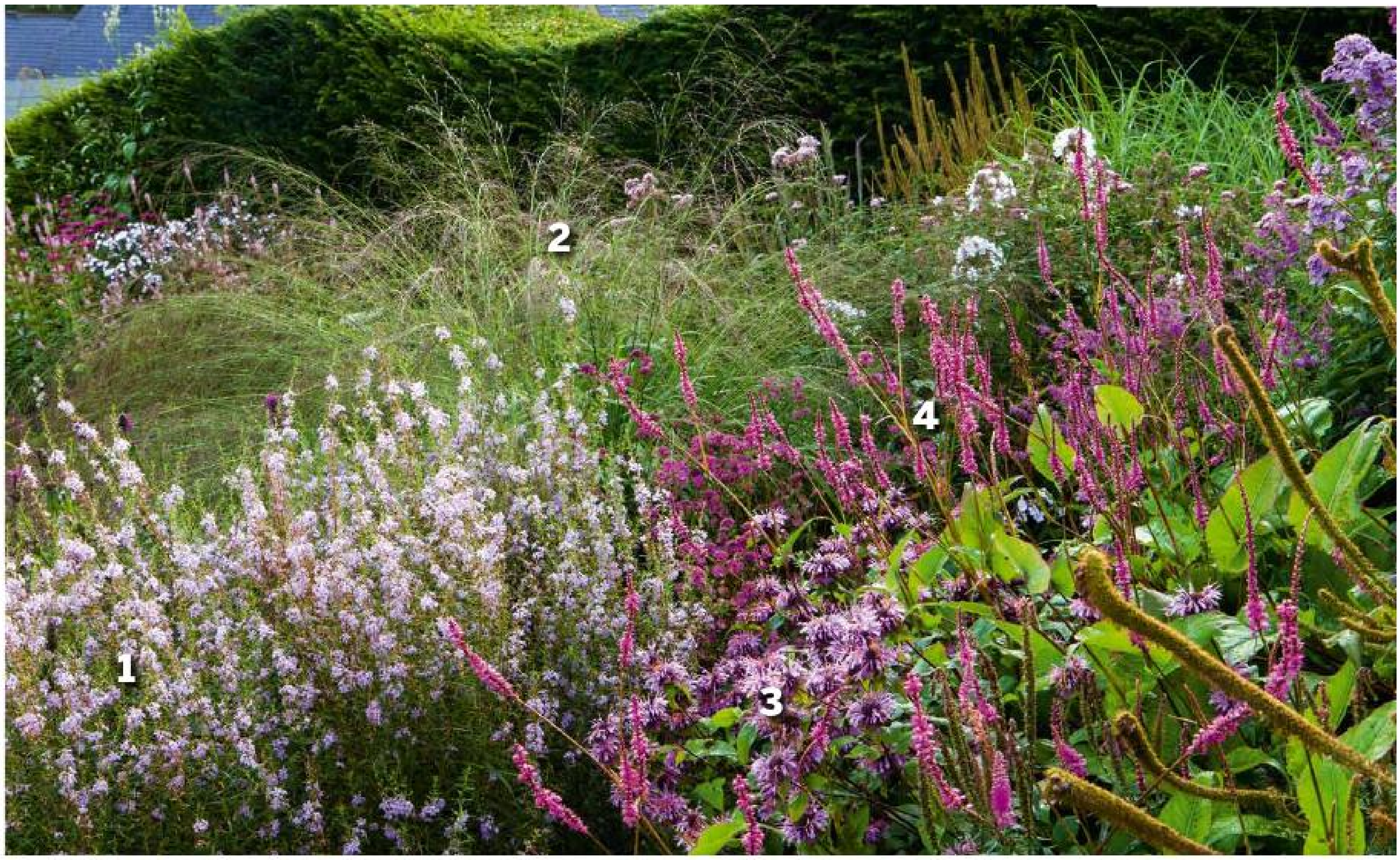
continued on page 62 ▷

Four plant combinations



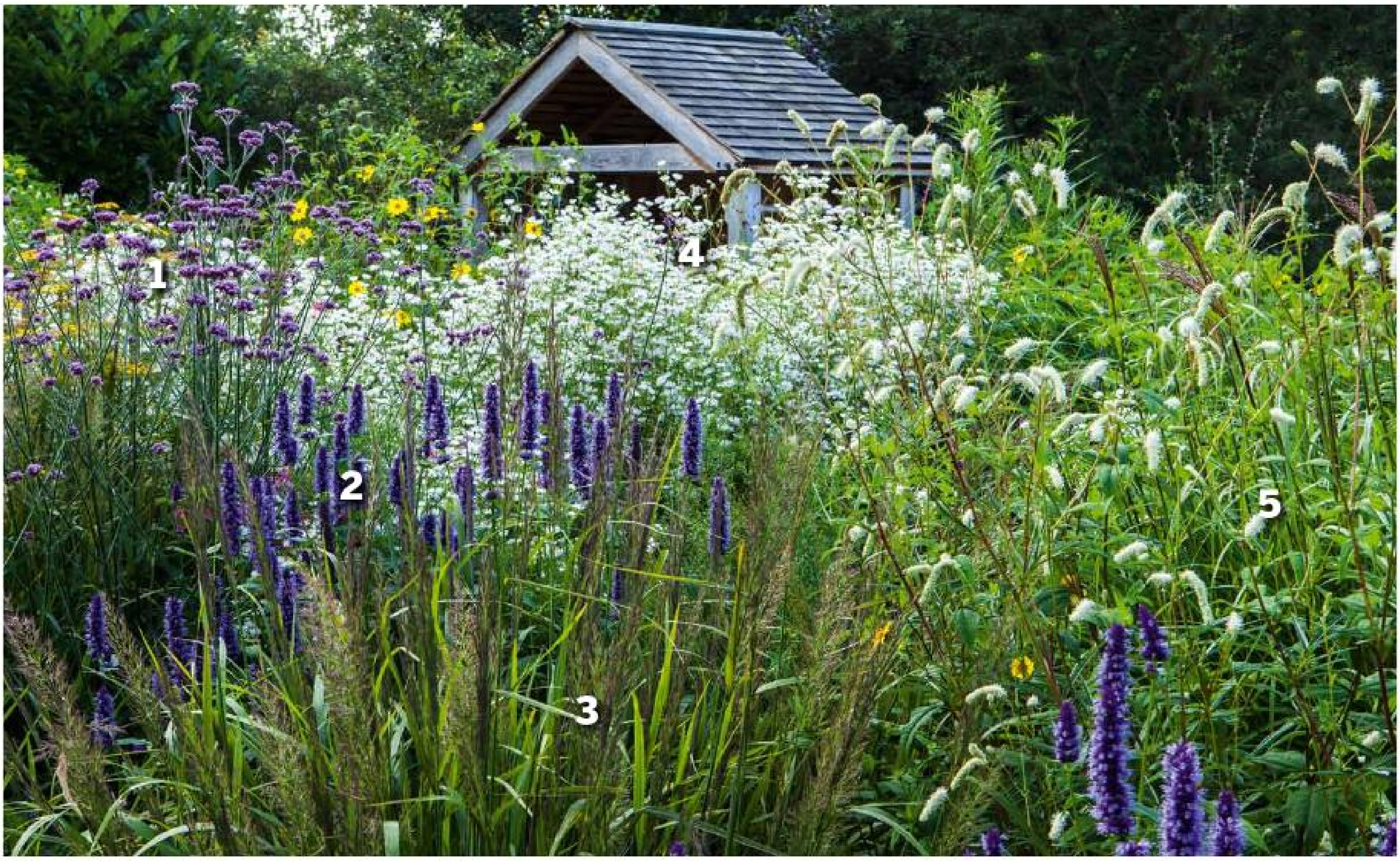
Onwards and upwards

The upright blue of *Agastache* makes a striking contrast with the flat daisy heads of *Echinacea* – a contrast that will be maintained when they transform into seedheads. **1** *Saponaria × lempergii* 'Max Frei' **2** *Echinacea purpurea* 'Pink Glow' **3** *Agastache* 'Black Adder' **4** *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Erica'.



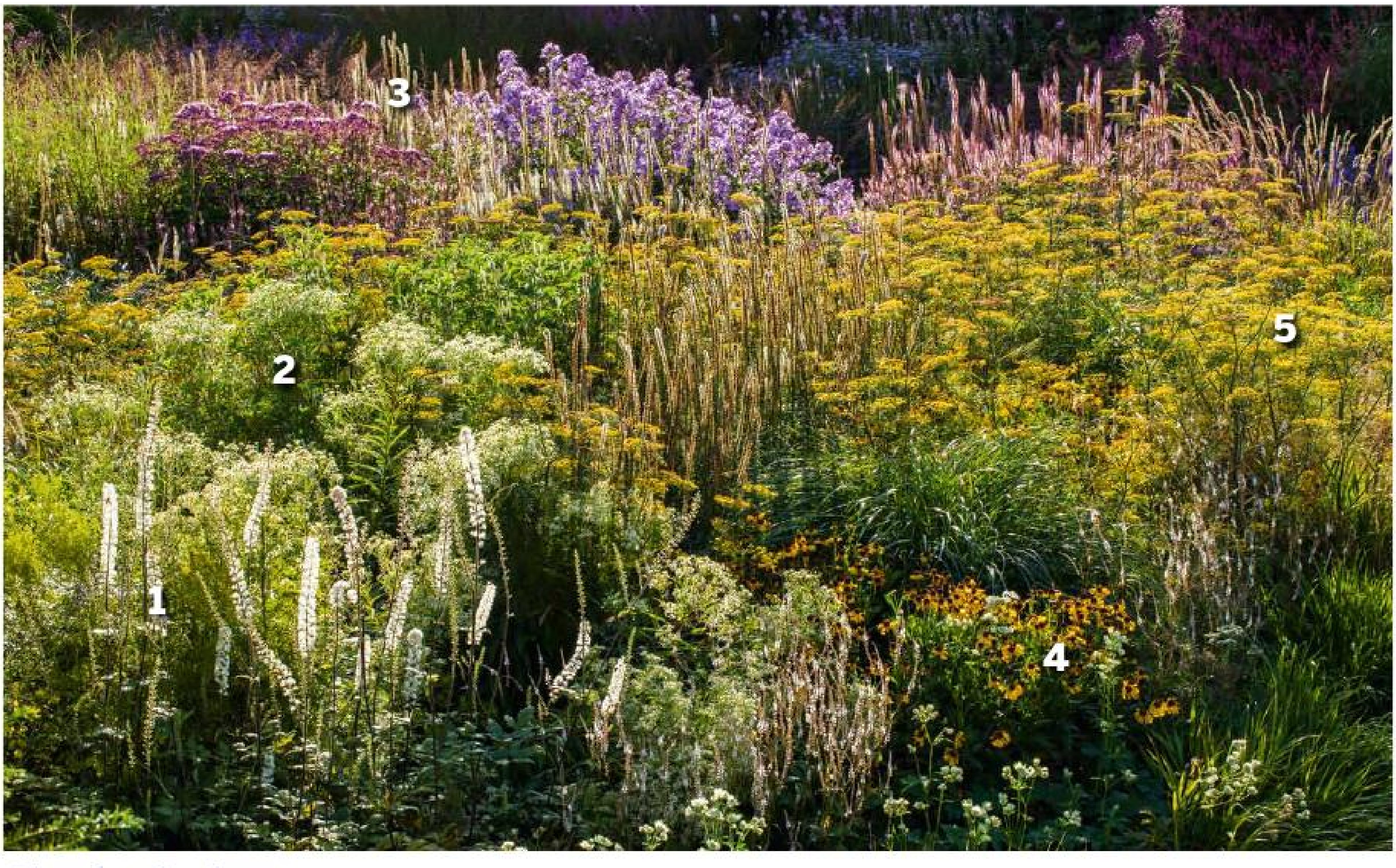
Make it last

Persicaria is one of the most useful late border perennials; colourful for months it will collapse with the first hard frost while seedheads of the other plants here will continue to stand. **1** *Lythrum virgatum* pale form **2** *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Transparent' **3** *Monarda* 'Neon' **4** *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'September Spires'.



Keeping cool

A white cloud of *Erigeron* dominates, echoed by the fluffy white tassels of *Sanguisorba*. Mixed with the purples and blues of *Verbena* and *Agastache*, it creates a wonderfully cool combination. **1** *Verbena bonariensis* **2** *Agastache* 'Black Adder' **3** *Calamagrostis brachytricha* **4** *Erigeron annuus* **5** *Sanguisorba tenuifolia* 'Stand Up Comedian'.



Clouds of colour

A cloud of golden *Foeniculum* (fennel) flowers is offset by the firmer shapes of *Helenium*. Spires are repeated through the planting, including white *Actaea* and *Veronicastrum*. **1** *Actaea* 'Prichard's Giant' **2** *Aster umbellatus* **3** *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Diane' **4** *Helenium* 'Wesergold' **5** *Foeniculum vulgare* 'Purpureum'.

With looser planting schemes, shapes are as important as colour: form gives the eye something to hang on to

▷ going on to discuss a growing interest in small creeping plants that fill in the gaps between larger perennials. One of his examples is the purple-leaved creeping *Acaena inermis* 'Purpurea', which fills a new bed in the garden, between clumps of *Sporobolus heterolepis*.

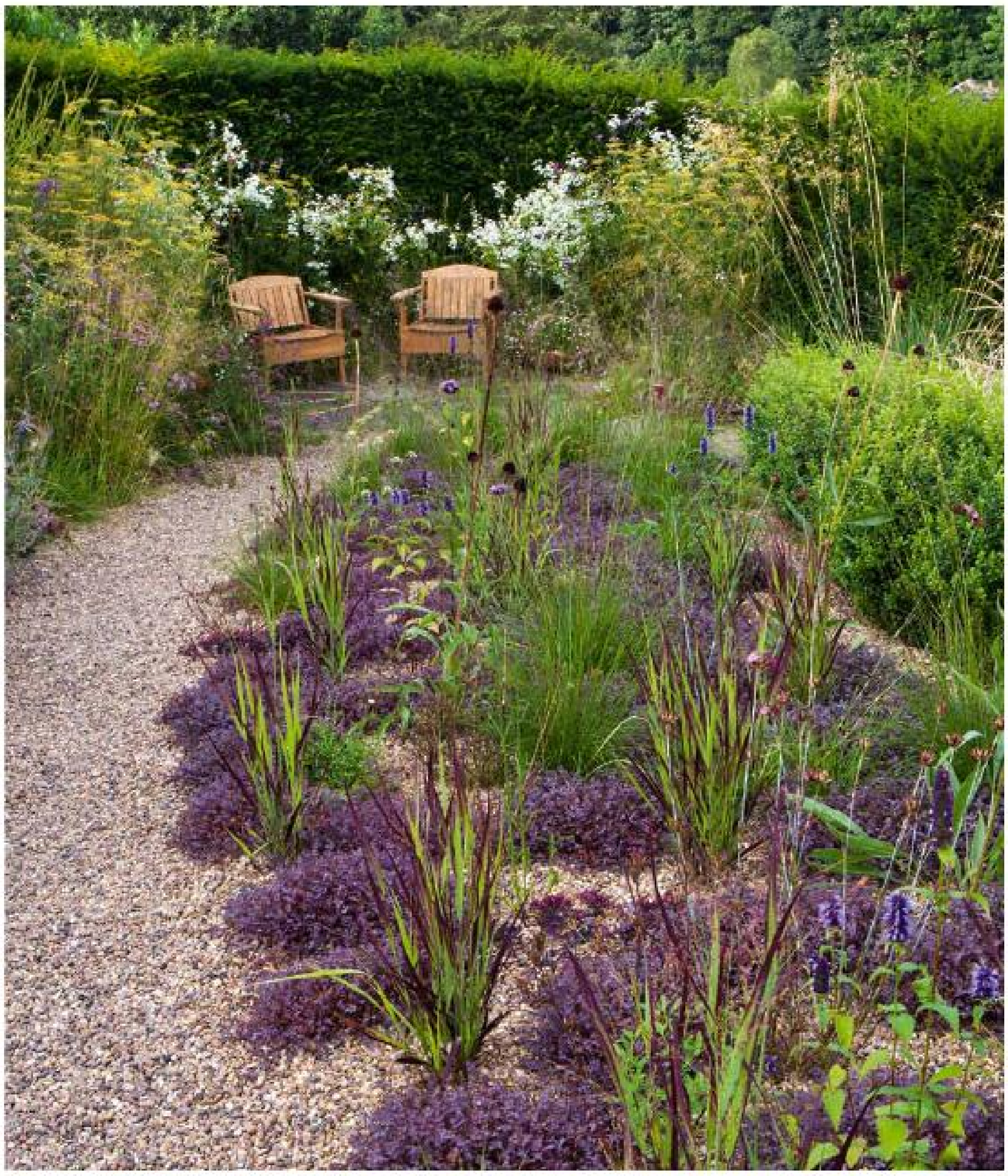
It was interesting to see this highly drought-tolerant and long-lived prairie grass thriving, as it can be painfully slow to grow in its first few years; it needs a hot summer to establish. That it does so well here shows that plants bedded in at a good size will perform well. Fellow prairie grass *Panicum virgatum* displays wonderful seedheads in autumn, and provides excellent autumn colour, too.

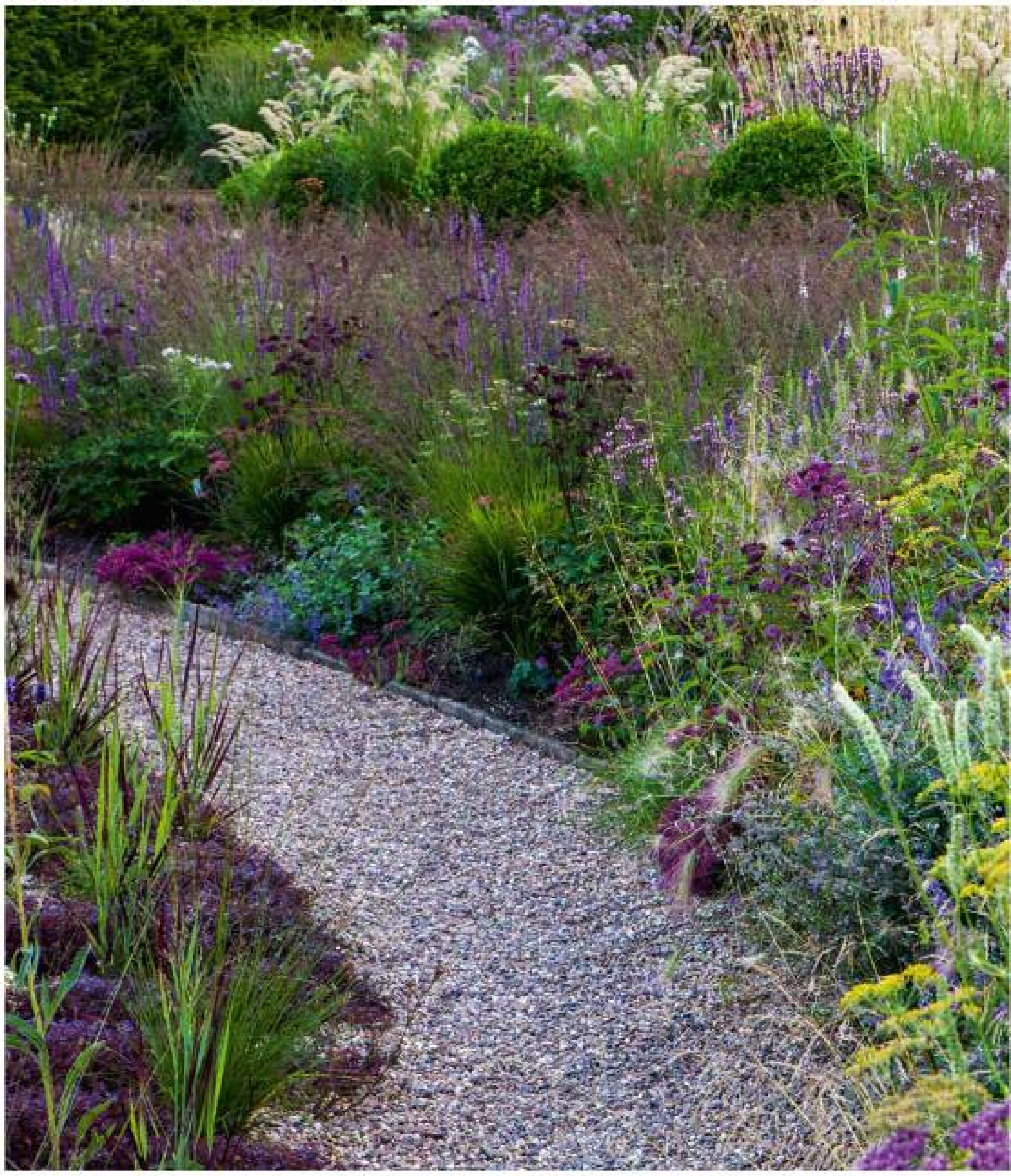
What Britain – and the north in particular – lack in summer heat is made up for with generous midsummer light, and this is often a compensatory factor for plants from regions with warmer summers. However, it makes sense to rely primarily on species that like cool summers, such as the truly stunning array of *Astrantia*. It's enough to make a gardener from the Home Counties weep, especially since here they flower on and off all summer long.

Stephen says something that may surprise many gardeners. "We have added lots of sand and grit over the years to lighten the soil, but it has also had the effect of reducing fertility. This is a good thing as many perennials grow better in a leaner environment – there's less lush growth, reducing the need to stake. Also for species that need regular division, it reduces the frequency of having to do this." So there you have it: evidence from a truly accomplished gardener that the old wisdom of heaping loads of manure on to perennials isn't necessary and may even be counterproductive. A garden of beauty but also one from which to learn a great deal. ☐

USEFUL INFORMATION

Dove Cottage Nursery, Shibden Hall Road, Hipperholme,
near Halifax, West Yorkshire HX3 9XA.
Tel 01422 203553. **Website** www.dovecottagenursery.co.uk
Opening Times March – June, Wednesday – Sunday. 10am-5pm and Bank Holiday Mondays, July – 28 September, Wednesday – Saturday, 10am-5pm.
Garden open June – September. Same times as the nursery.
Open for NGS Fridays from 7 June – 27 September, 10am-5pm.



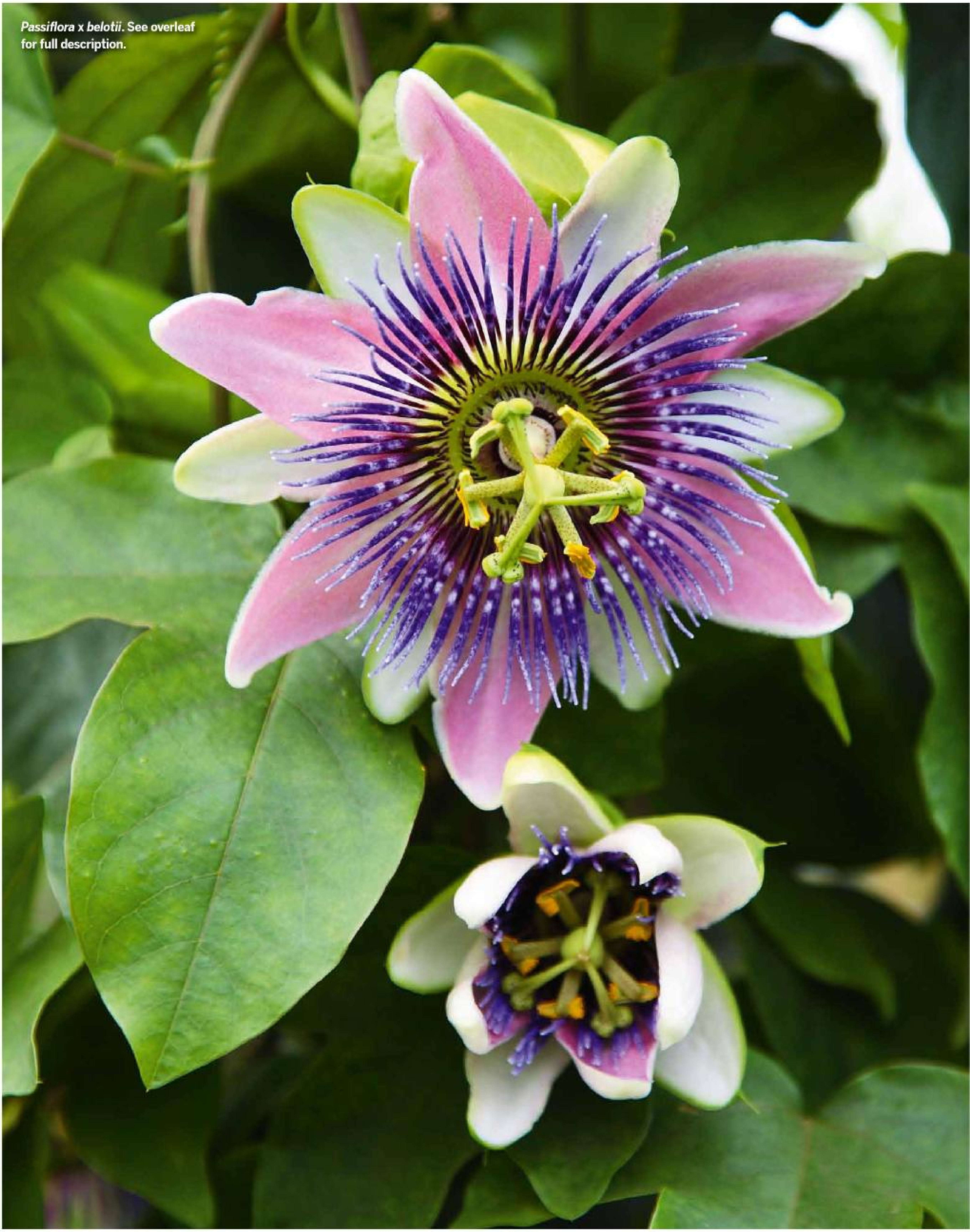


Top left An area of low planting in the centre of the garden has *Acaena inermis* 'Purpurea' providing ground cover, dotted with tufts of *Panicum* 'Red Metal'.

Top right Exuberant plantings in pink with the monardas 'Othello' (front left) and 'Talud' (middle left) and the drooping tassels of *Sanguisorba hakusanensis*.

Bottom left Interplanted layers of perennials include the striking *Astrantia* 'Dark Desire', with the purple picked up by several well-spaced *Molinia* 'Poul Petersen'.

Bottom right A grass avenue of *Stipa gigantea* 'Gold Fontaene' towers over smaller grasses and plants, including *Eryngium bourgatii* 'Picos Blue'.



***Passiflora x belotii*. See overleaf for full description.**

What's your passion?

Passiflora's effect on the senses is truly seductive, making it hard to believe that these exotic blooms gave rise to a name that is rooted in religious piety

WORDS LIA LEENDERTZ PHOTOGRAPHS ANNAÏCK GUITTENY

Lia Leendertz is an author, garden writer and allotmenteer who lives in Bristol. Lia is a regular contributor to *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*, as well as GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

Passionflowers can make you feel like a lovelorn teenager: the ones you want most of all are the most troublesome, and by far the trickiest to hang on to in the long run. They flaunt spectacular colours and fine, intricate petals, but in reality it is only the duller ones that are fully hardy and dependable. The rest run a good chance of breaking your heart.

I'm stretching my passionflower metaphor here, but I'm not the only one. The name is derived not from the effects of the fruit on the frisky, but from some really quite fanciful religious imagery. Some devout soul with a little too much time on his hands once decried that the ovary was chalice-shaped, and so represented the Holy Grail; the tendrils represented the whips used against Christ; the ten petals represent the ten faithful apostles; and on and shoe-horningly on. It stuck.

It's a heavy burden for a climber to bear, but passionflowers carry it off. Even the dull and dependable end of the passionflower scale is pretty fabulous. The flowers might have been constructed by a sculptor: a layer of thick, waxy sepals and petals, then several rings of spiky coronal filaments, and then the reproductive parts, sitting atop the lot like a comedy UFO. *Passiflora caerulea* and *P. incarnata*, the hardiest species, are both coloured in pale blues, whites and purples. Some of the more spectacular passionflowers are in shades of brightest red, yellow, white and orange, but Jane Lindsay of Tynings Nursery – holder of one of the two *Passiflora* National Collections – says gardeners should always be wary of hardiness claims thrown about by those trying to sell the latest hybrid. "Very few are fully hardy but often plant sellers push something as hardy in order to help it sell. Even those we consider hardy are actually happier in a fairly sheltered spot."

Jane breaks passionflowers down into several categories: the hardy; the half hardy; those for a cool greenhouse; and those for a conservatory or heated greenhouse. The half hardies such as *P.* 'Betty Myles Young' (a vigorous plant with lilac flowers) and *P.* 'Abigail' (mainly white with touches of purple) are perhaps the most accessible of the more interesting types. They are only hardy down to -6°C, so they will survive winter in mild areas if they are given a sheltered spot with great drainage and a good stroke of luck. Drainage is the key for all of the passionflowers, says Jane. "It is winter wet that they really don't like, so if you are going to plant these half hardy ones outside, do it in the lee of a house wall where they won't take the full force of the rain, and where their roots will be among builders rubble."

If you are not convinced that your area counts as 'mild', then even these need to be in a cold greenhouse. A cold greenhouse gives access to a whole group of passionflowers that will need that little bit of protection in the winter, but can be moved out of doors in summer. The edible passionflower, *P. edulis*, is among this group. Beware winter wet again here, says Jane. When growing them in pots it is important not to over-pot them. If you do, the roots can be left in damp compost throughout winter, and they hate that. Passionflowers like neglect, so pot on gradually, slowly building up the root system.

But of course the most lovely are the fussiest and most demanding, and need a heated greenhouse or conservatory in order to thrive. Some of the smallest of these, such as *P. citrina*, with beautiful little starburst yellow flowers, and *P. allantophylla* – which has the tiniest and most intricate flowers of all – can even be grown as an unusual house plant. If you have a heated conservatory, and particularly if you are lucky enough to have conservatory borders in which they can spread their roots, you can plant one of these objects of desire with the certainty that it will stick with you. □

• Turn the page for a selection of Jane's favourite passionflowers.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society

†Hardiness ratings given where available.

1 *Passiflora vitifolia* 'Scarlet Flame'

This bright red beauty is not remotely hardy, but with enough heat it will produce flowers for ten months of the year. Large-growing and evergreen, it's best in a conservatory border where it can spread. Minimum UK temperature 10-16°C. USDA 10a-11[†].

2 *P. alata*

Heavily perfumed with a lemony scent, this Amazonian native goes by the common name of fragrant granadilla. Grow it in a heated greenhouse or conservatory where it may produce its edible fruit, which are highly prized in Brazil. AGM*. RHS H1a, USDA 10a-11.

3 *P. aurantia*

This pretty Australian species has a neat trick. Its long, thin-petalled flowers open a pale apricot and then deepen to a stronger orange over four or five days. Keep above 5ºC in a lightly heated glasshouse. USDA 9b-11.

4 *P.* x *belotii*

Beautiful *P.* x *belotii* is a vigorous hybrid of *P. alata* and *P. caerulea*. It is very free flowering and the flowers are highly scented. It only needs a temperature of 2ºC, so plant in an unheated glasshouse. USDA 7a-10b.

5 *P.* 'Amethyst'

P. 'Amethyst' has also been known as 'Lavender Lady' – a name that suits the beautiful, reflexed pale purple flowers. In mild areas, try it outdoors in your sunniest, most sheltered spot, or give the protection of a cool glasshouse. AGM. RHS H3. USDA 7b-11.

6 *P.* x *smythiana*

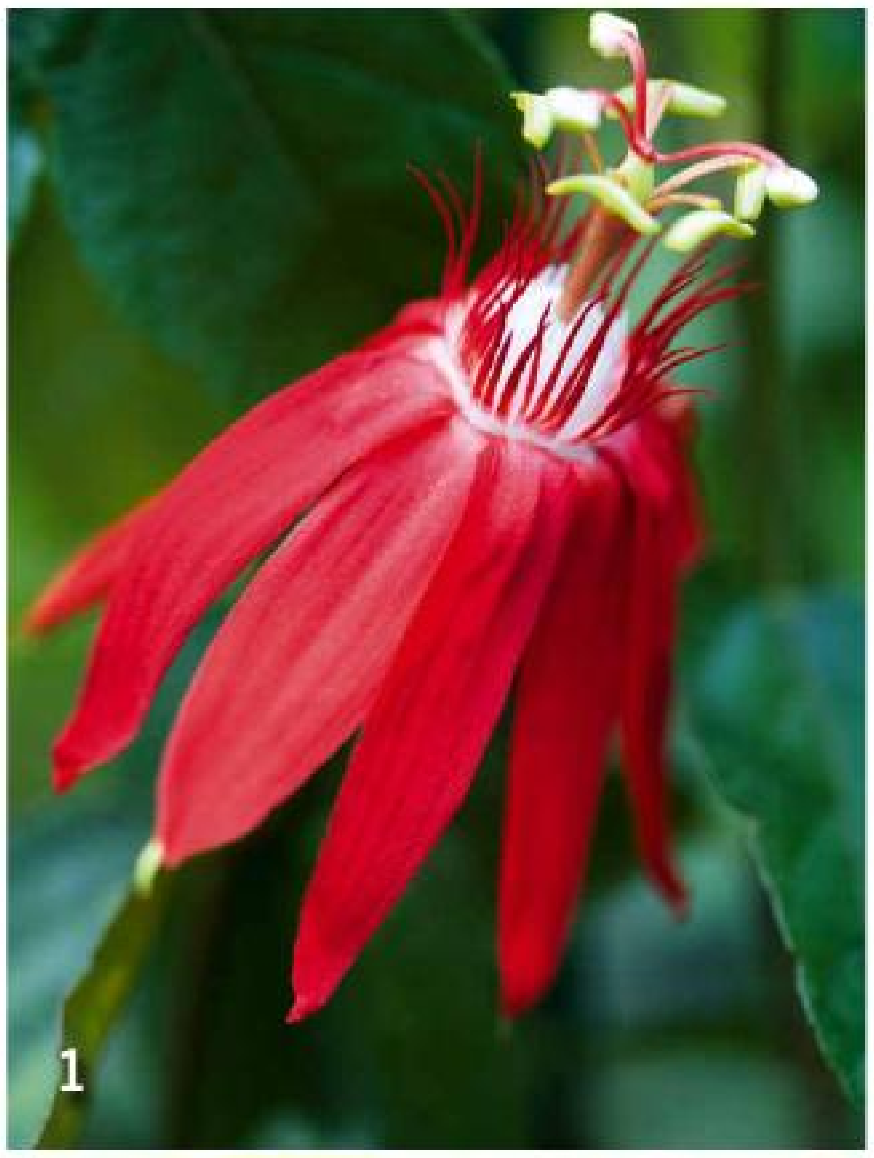
P. x *smythiana*, a hybrid of *P. antioquiensis* and *P. mixta*, has large yet elegant dark rose-pink flowers, with strongly swept-back petals. A beautiful thing for the border of a glasshouse kept above 5ºC.

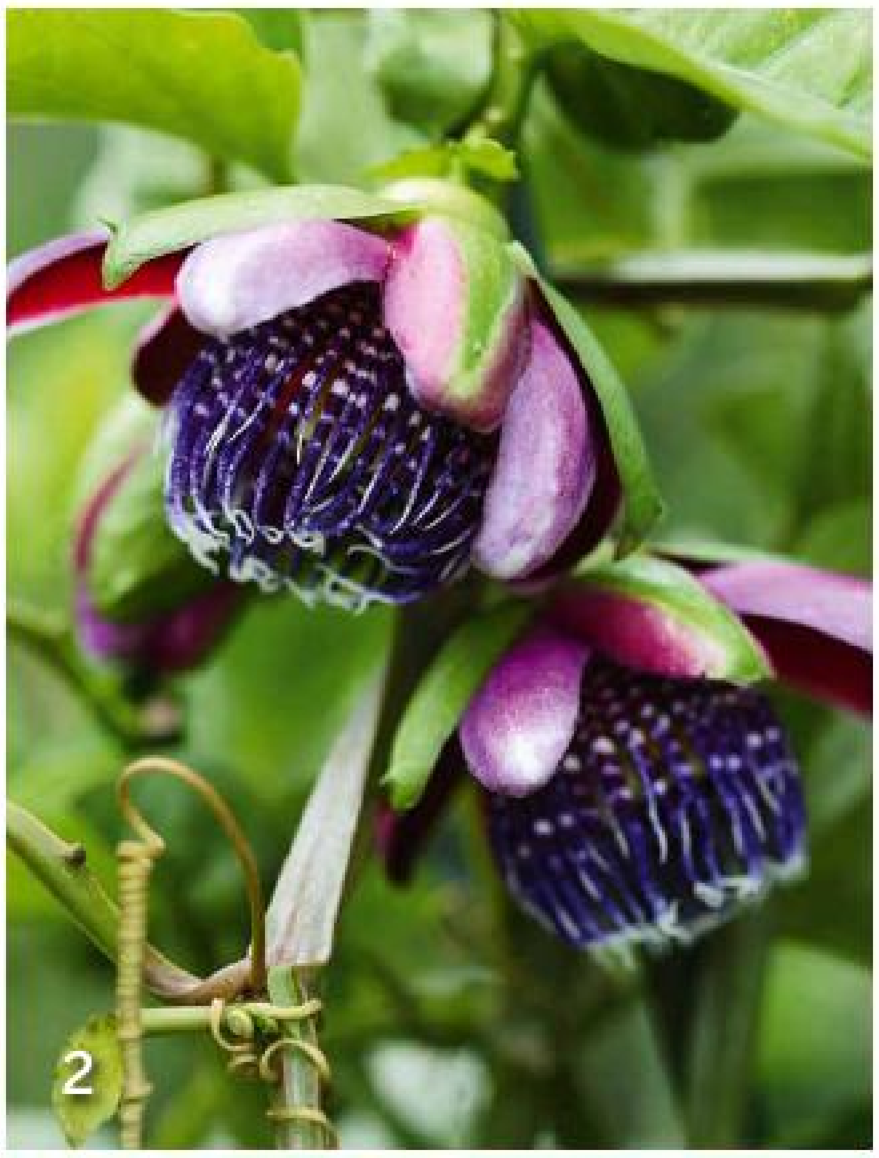
7 *P. citrina*

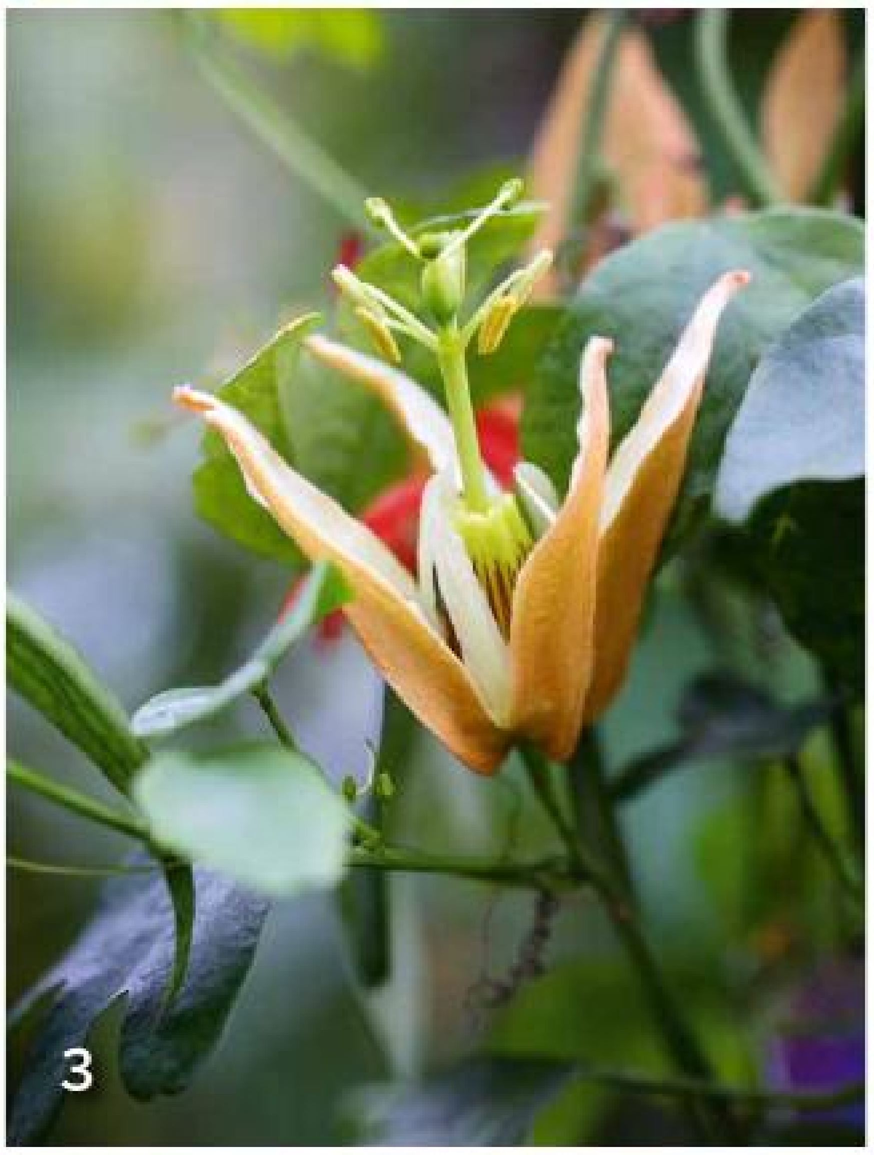
This passionflower is small and compact enough to be grown as a house plant, where it will produce its tiny, starry, lemon yellow flowers over a long period, up to ten months of the year. USDA 8a-10b.

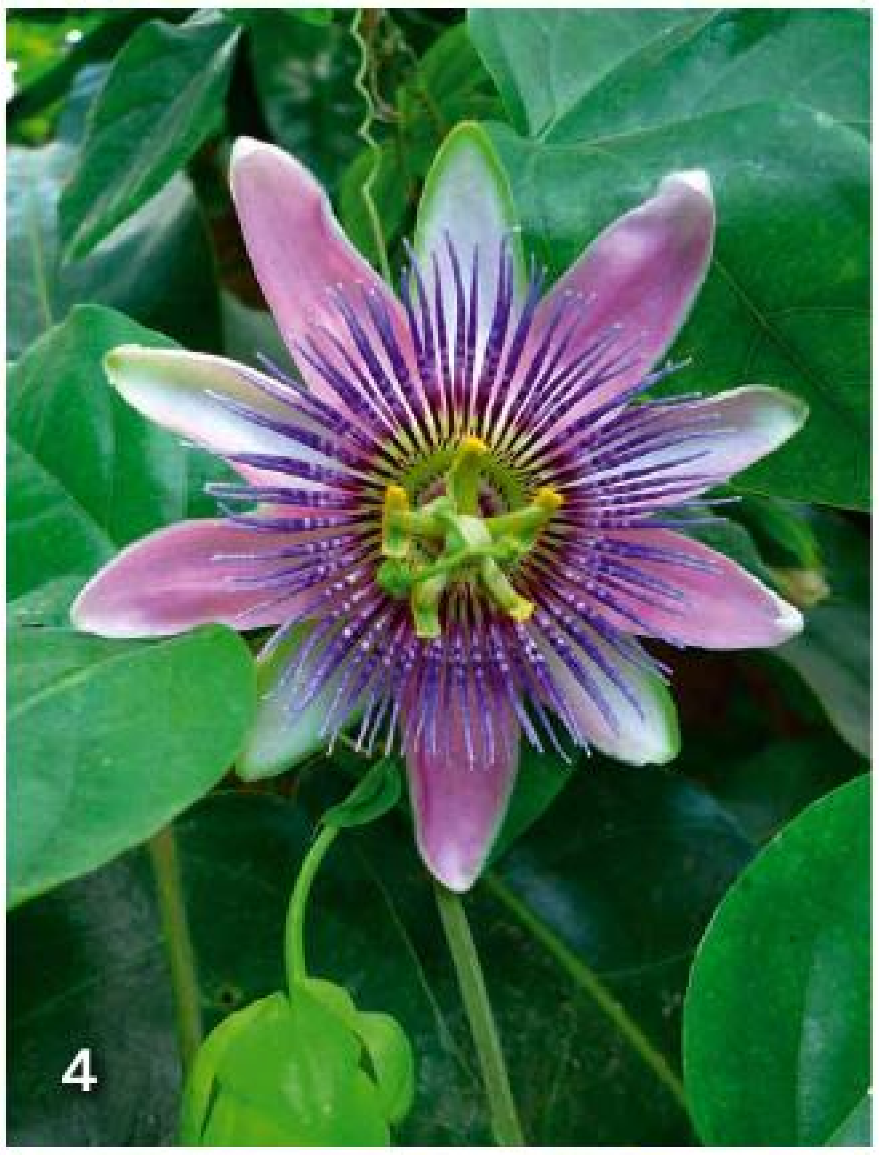
8 *P.* 'Abigail'

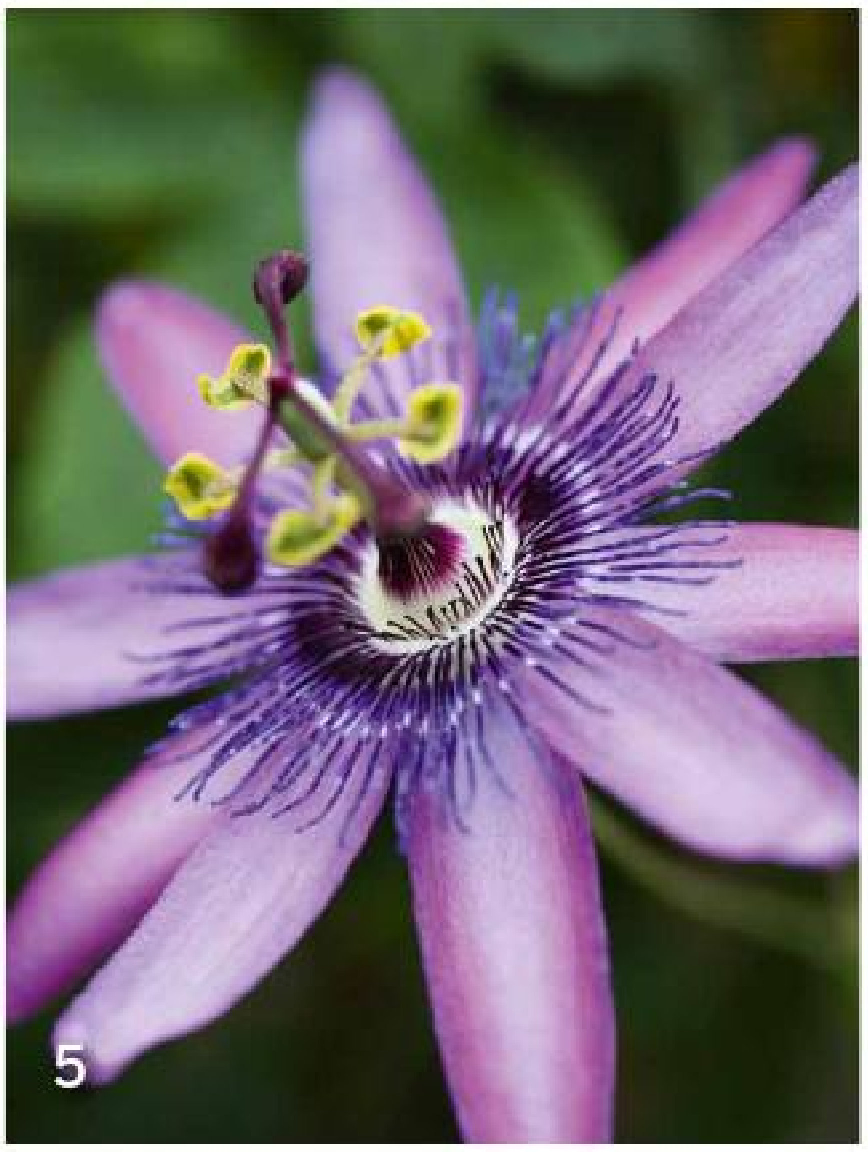
P. 'Abigail' has strong purple colouring, fine shaping and looks particularly exotic for one of the hardier of the bunch. It flowers from May to October. Worth trying outdoors in a dry, sheltered spot, or in a cool glasshouse.

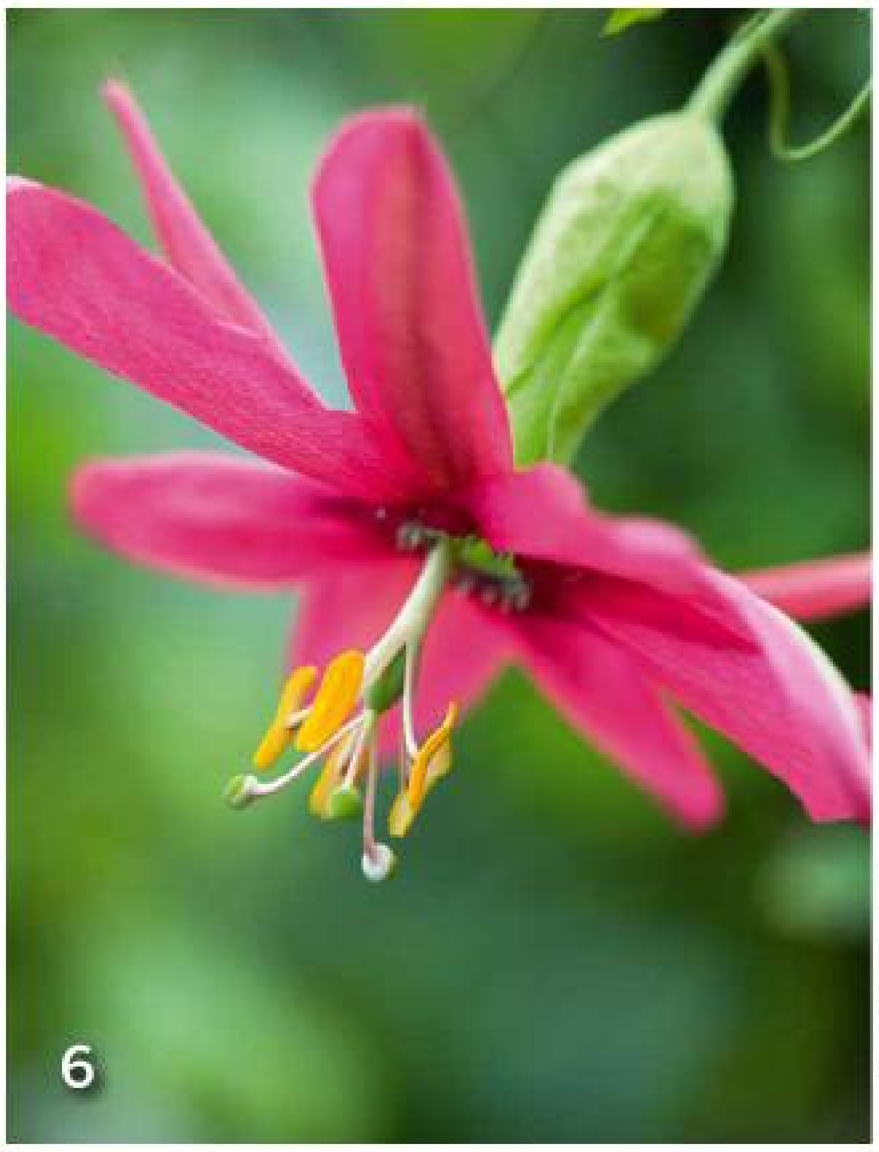












4 BLICKWINKEL / ALAMY

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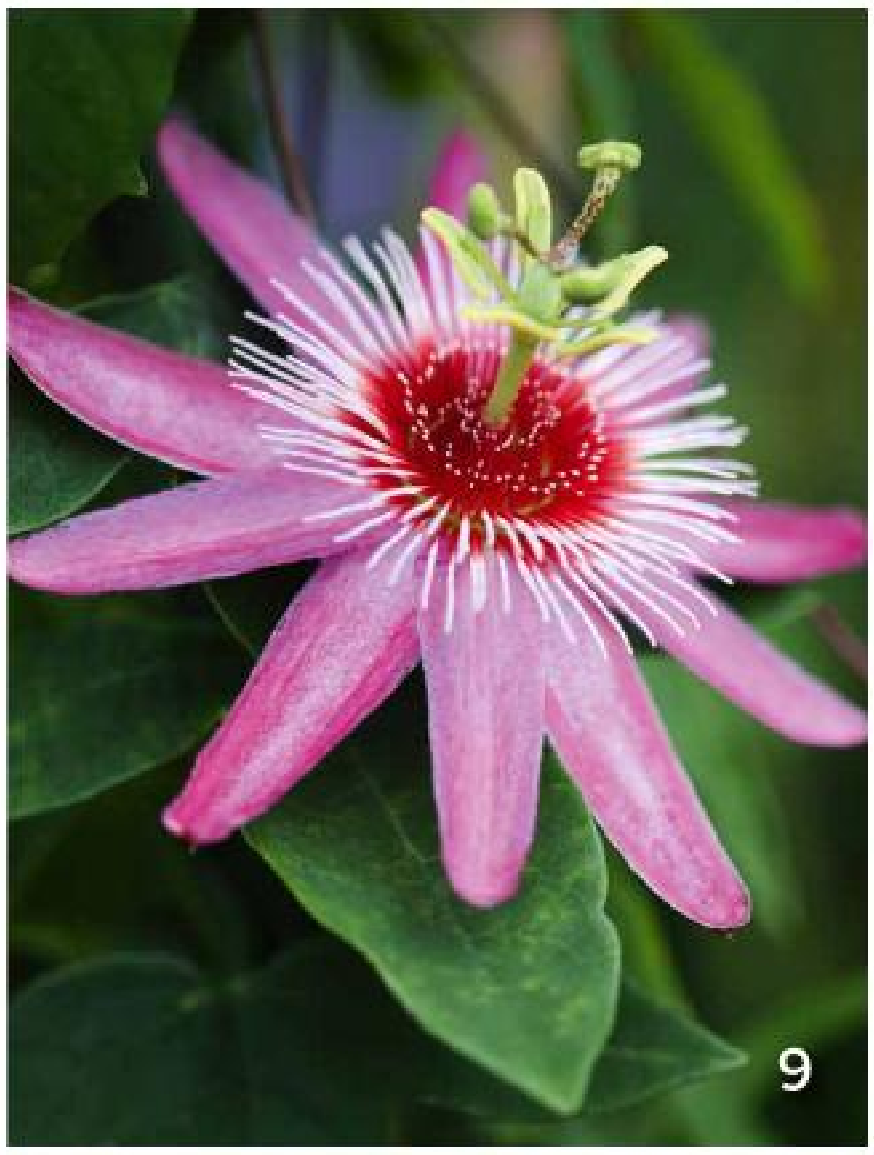
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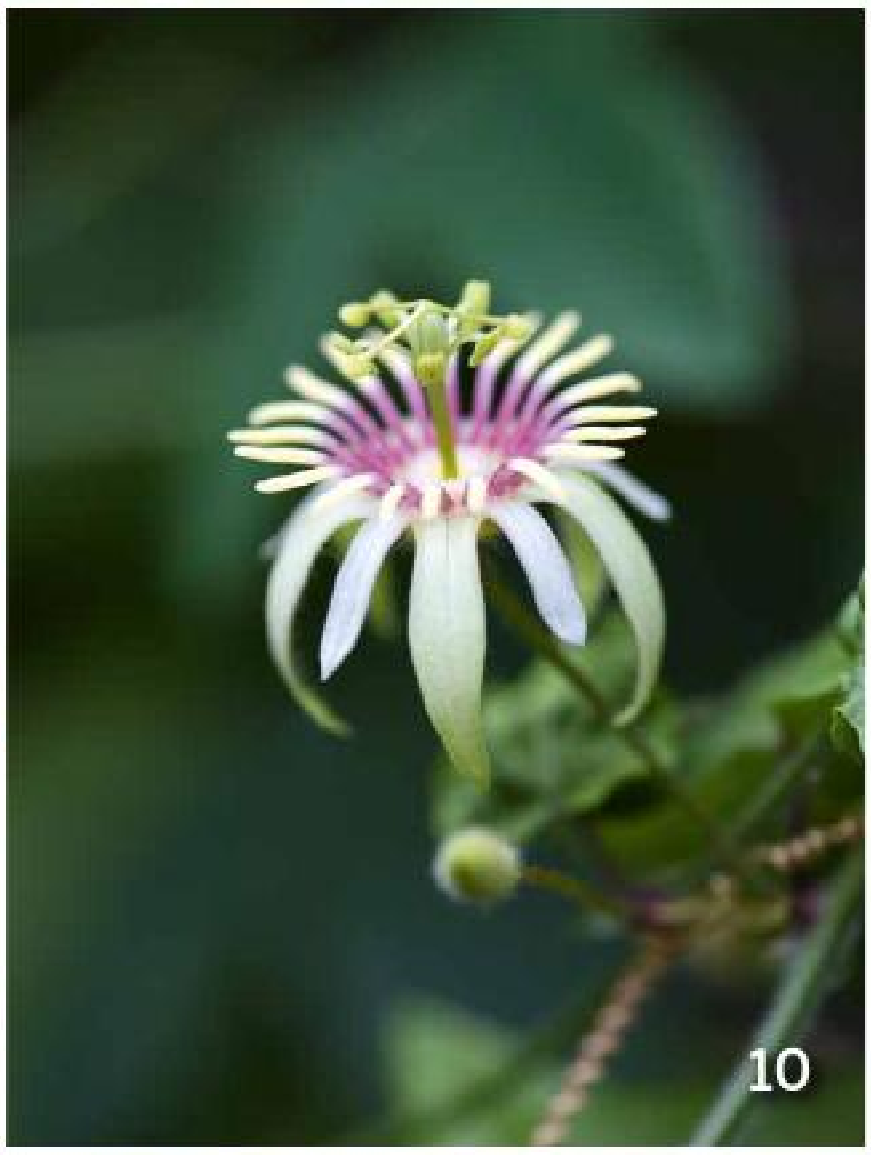
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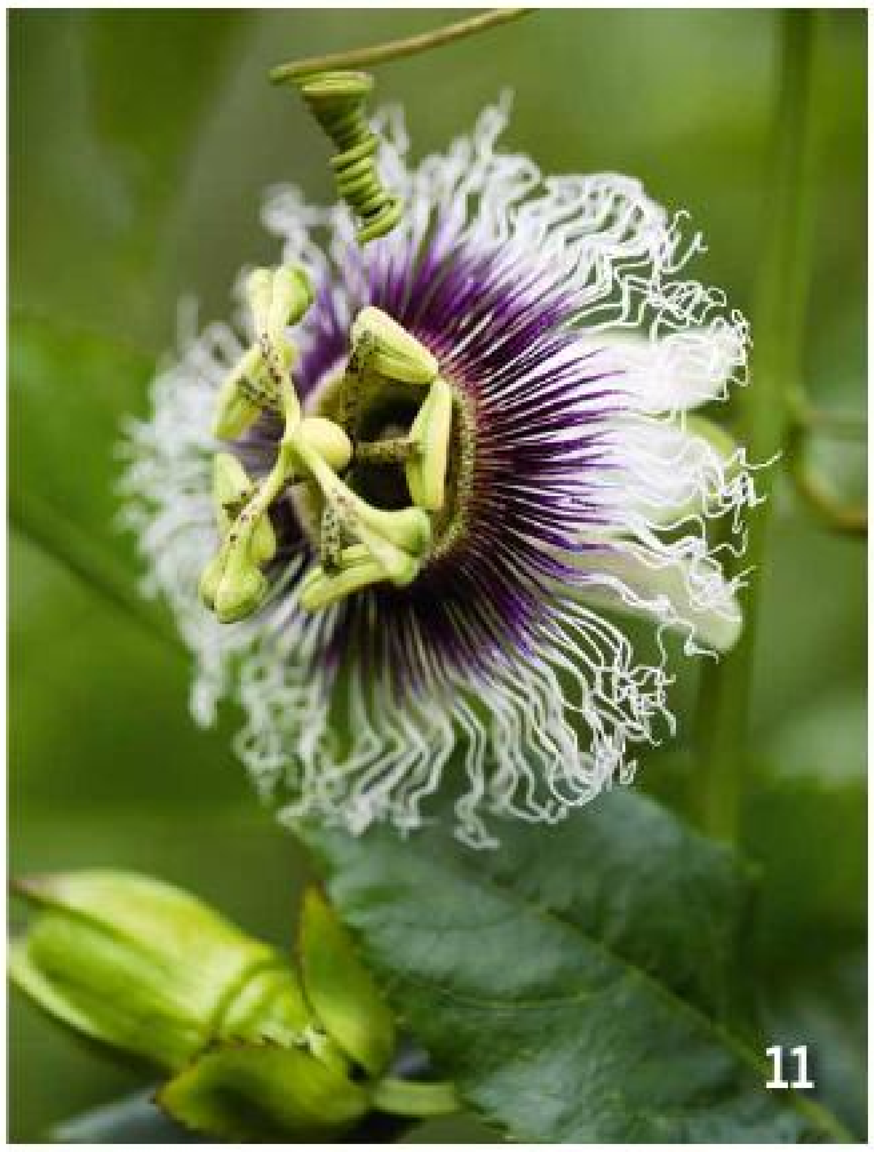
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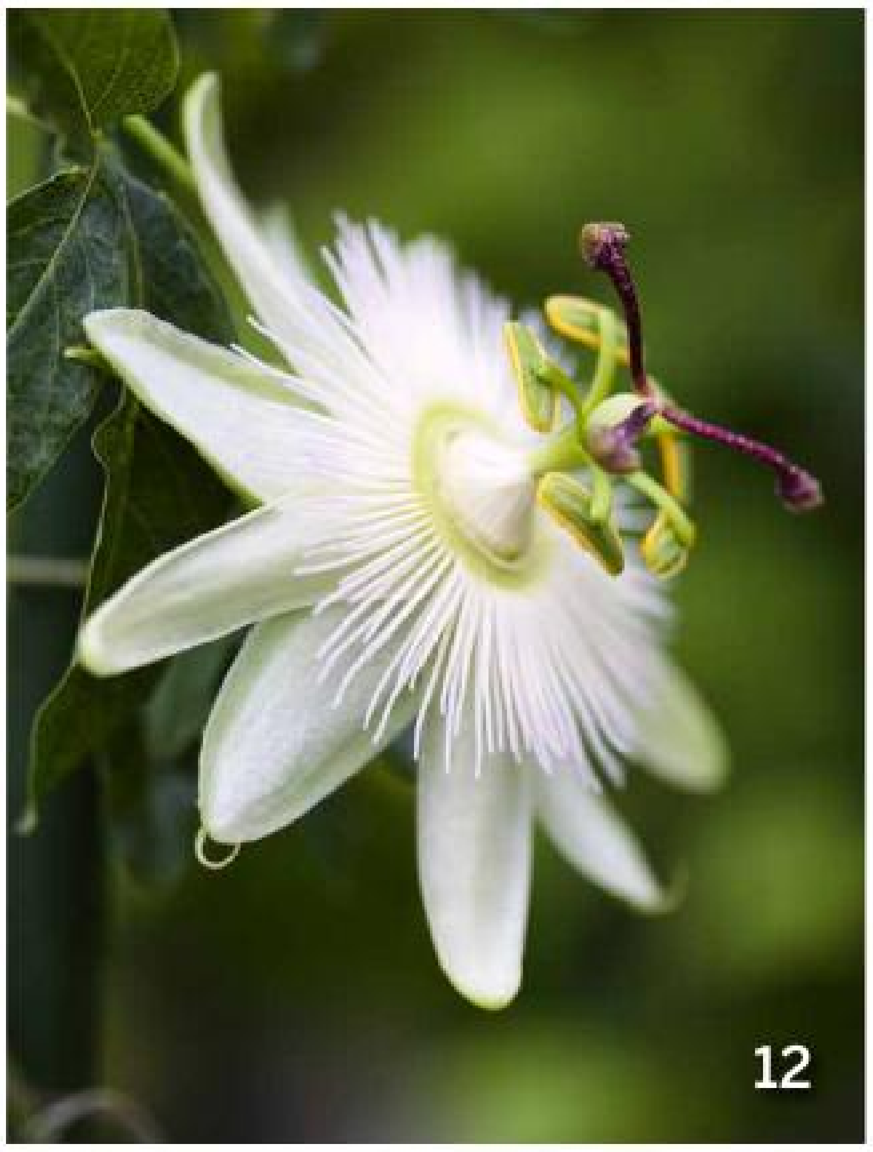
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9 *P.* 'Anastasia'

The deep pink flowers of *P.* 'Anastasia' are produced on long, trailing peduncles. The flowers then sit back beautifully, looking up slightly and making for a particularly elegant habit. Perfect for a cool glasshouse or unheated conservatory. USDA 11.

10 *P. conzattiana*

Grown as a house plant in the USA, this little plant produces myriad tiny but striking green and dark purple flowers from March to November. Very free flowering and happy wherever temperatures remain above 3°C.

11 *P. edulis*

Often sold as hardy, *P. edulis* actually needs a little protection from frost in order to thrive. Very vigorous, so grow it in the border of a large, unheated glasshouse or polytunnel. Produces delicious edible fruit. Minimum UK temperature 10-16°C. USDA 8a-10b.

12 *P. caerulea* 'Constance Eliott'

Purest white flowers and one of the hardier plants, but will still appreciate a sheltered aspect. Happy in sun or semi-shade and not too vigorous, so it keeps a better shape than some of the faster-growing types. Orange fruit in autumn. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 6a-10b.

USEFUL INFORMATION

National Collections

- Jane Lindsay, National Collection of Passiflora cultivars. Tynings Nursery, 109 Clevedon Road, Tickenham, North Somerset BS21 6RE. Tel 01275 852439, www.tyningsclimbers.co.uk By appointment only.

- John Vanderplank, National Collection of Passiflora, Lampley Road, Kingston Seymour, Clevedon, North Somerset BS21 6XS. Tel 01934 833350. Open Monday – Saturday, 9am-1pm and 2-5pm; Sundays and Bank Holidays by appointment only.

SUPPLIERS

Cross Common Nursery Online orders.
The Lizard, Helston, Cornwall TR12 7PD.
Tel 01326 290722,
www.crosscommonnursery.co.uk

National Collection of Passiflora
Mail order. See above.

Tynings Nursery Mail order. See above.

The arched walkway brims with dahlias as far as the eye can see. A contrasting backdrop of lush foliage picks out the dahlias' intense colours and varied forms.

In brief

What Private garden designed and managed by owners.
Where Lottum, a village in the province of Limburg, the Netherlands.
Size One acre.
Soil Loamy sand.
Climate Can get quite cold with frosts, while both summer temperature and rainfall are above the national average. The microclimate is influenced by its location on the left bank, with its 'river dunes', of the river Meuse.
Points of interest A romantic, collectors' garden with flowers, flowers and more flowers, and a particular fascination with dahlias.

A legacy of love

Over 42 years Nel and Theej Verheggen have lovingly created a romantic mix of billowing grasses, rambling roses and, above all, dahlias

WORDS **SIMONE VAN HEININGEN** PHOTOGRAPHS **SIBYLLE PIETREK**

This is a true plant-lovers' haven, created by a pair of dedicated and passionate gardeners

A strange thing happens when you visit Nel and Theej Verheggen's garden in the picturesque village of Lottum in the Netherlands: you immediately feel at home. Everyone does, whatever their horticultural creed.

This isn't a designer garden. It has slowly evolved, following the life cycle of a family that has lived here for 42 years. Its first incarnation was child friendly, complete with a lawn for kickabouts and plenty of trees in which to build elevated hideaways. As the children grew up it transformed into more of an ornamental garden, home to an increasing number of colourful blooms and a hint of what was to come. By the time their three children left home, Nel and Theej were ready to go to town – "finally!", Nel laughs.

Maybe this garden feels so familiar because it reminds us of a grandparent's garden, in the best possible way. It's the kind of garden that is filled with flowers, where your grandfather might go out and come back with a haphazard bouquet for you, one that tops any florist's artistry because its main ingredient is love. This is a true plant-lovers' haven, created by a pair of dedicated and passionate gardeners.

While the Verheggens are not professional growers, gardening is part of the heritage of anyone who comes from Lottum, as Nel and Theej do. Lottum is known as 'the rose village', for good reason: 70 per cent of all roses grown in the Netherlands originate from here. Rambling roses such as *Rosa* 'Plein de Grace' and *R.* 'Bobbie James', appear throughout the Verheggens' plot, echoing the land's legacy. But making an undeniable statement amid the pretty planting is the abundance of dahlias. From the miniature purple pompoms of *Dahlia* 'Oreti Duke' – "One of the first cultivars we bought, along with *D.* 'Franz Kafka' and *D.* 'Fascination' " – to gorgeous *D.* 'Eveline', whose snowy petals appear to have been dipped in lilac paint. "For a long time, dahlias were out of fashion," says Theej. "People associated them with old-fashioned veggie patches, where rows of bunched-up dahlias would stand like soldiers at attention. Of course, dahlias are susceptible to being blown over by the wind, but we use metal stakes no more than 40cm high. The surrounding plants keep them upright." On cue, Nel spots a *D.* 'Nuit d'Été' whose tall stems have "mingled" with an adjoining *Miscanthus* more than she likes. A gentle push back resolves everything.

Dahlias are ubiquitous in this garden and the fact that they suit any type of border comes as something of a surprise. In the 'four-coloured garden' they are grouped in colour blocks – white, including *D.* 'Karma Serena' and *D.* 'Myama Fubuki'; purple; yellow; and red – with perennials, such as hostas, and annuals, such as *Persicaria orientalis*. In a long double border *Allium* 'Globemaster' and lemony *Helianthus* 'Carine' mirror the strong burgundy verticals of *D.* 'Karma Choc'. Nel notes, "Dahlias are so rewarding. They provide colour from early summer to late October, in almost any location, in any soil."

Almost apologetically, Theej reveals the roots of his obsession: "Years ago, I went to

Continued on page 74 ▷

Dahlia combinations

1 *Dahlia* 'Bishop of Auckland' is a good dahlia for novices as it is a healthy and versatile plant. Like all 'Bishop' dahlia cultivars it has dark purple foliage, which provides contrast for smaller, bright flowering plants such as the daisy-like *Kalimeris* and purple umbels of *Sedum* 'Matrona'. Its height is perfectly matched by *Persicaria amplexicaulis* Taurus (= 'Blotau').

2 *D.* 'Twyning's After Eight' grows to around 1m high and has single white flowers that really stand out, especially as its foliage is almost black. Don't allow this monochrome colour scheme to compete with too many bright colours. Opt instead for the subtlety of grasses, such as *Calamagrostis brachytricha* (front left). Unlike many other ornamental grasses, this species does well in heavy clay soils.

3 Bright reddish orange *D.* 'Karma Irene' is perfect for bouquets and is not too overpowering. Plant with sunny, orange *D.* 'David Howard', *Malus* x *robusta* 'Red Sentinel' and *Sanguisorba officinalis* for a bright and uplifting border scheme.

4 *D.* 'Maroon Fox' is ideal for cutting. Its spherical pompoms are an invitation to combine it with differently shaped flowers, such as *Hydrangea aspera* (in background), spiky pink *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Rosea' and feathery *Artemisia lactiflora* 'Guizhou'. If you contrast flower shapes, don't contrast foliage colour too much – let the flowers do the talking.

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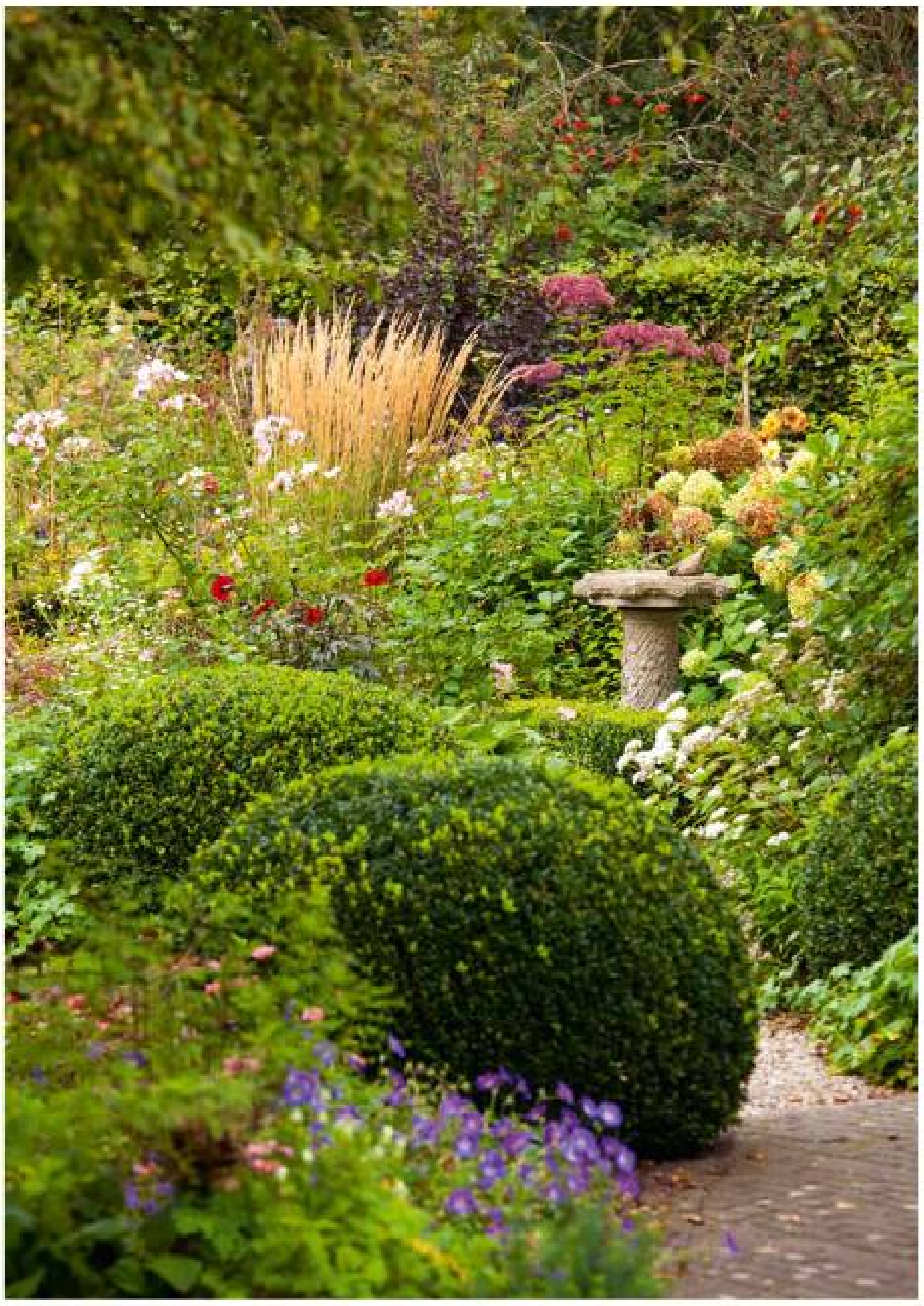
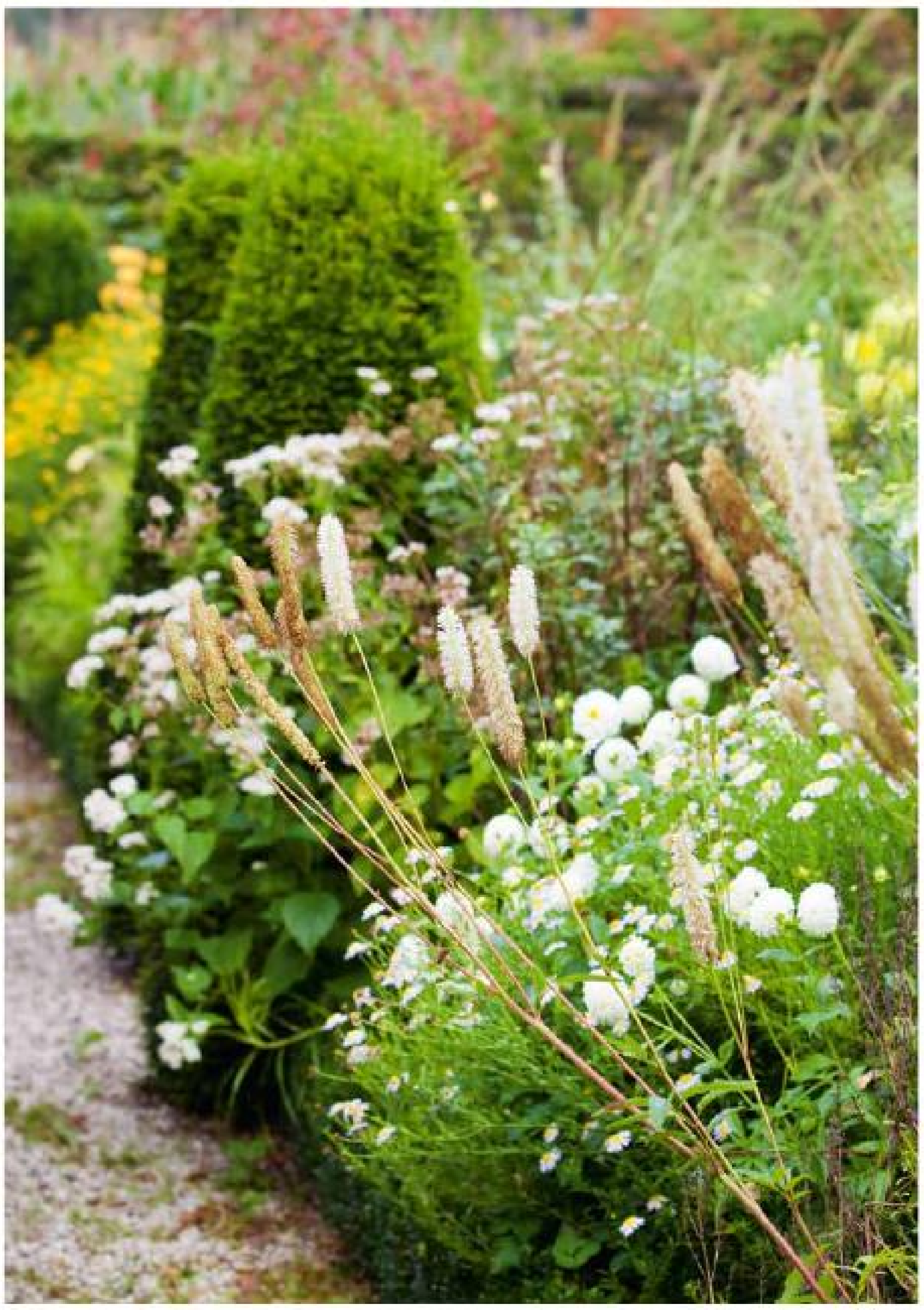
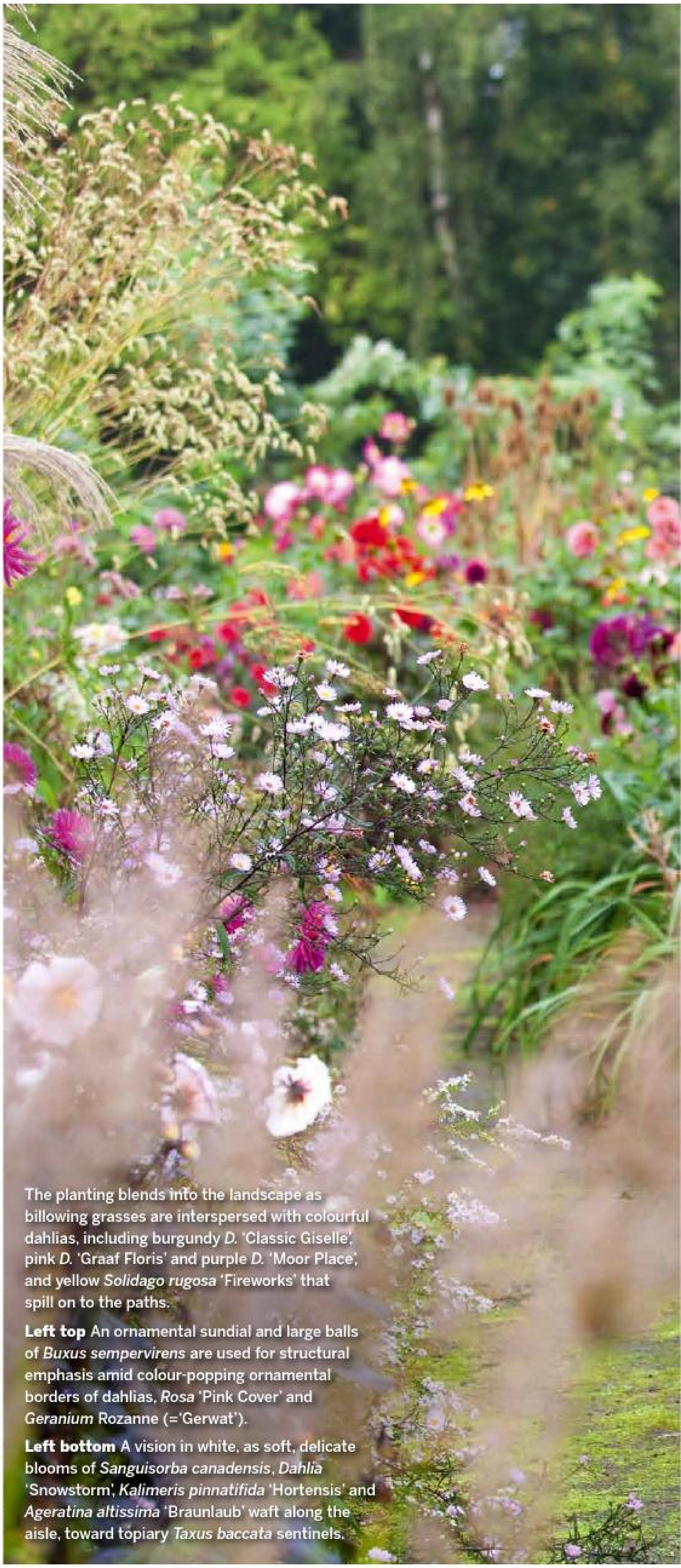






The planting blends into the landscape as billowing grasses are interspersed with colourful dahlias, including burgundy *D.* 'Classic Giselle', pink *D.* 'Graaf Floris' and purple *D.* 'Moor Place', and yellow *Solidago rugosa* 'Fireworks' that spill on to the paths.

Left top An ornamental sundial and large balls of *Buxus sempervirens* are used for structural emphasis amid colour-popping ornamental borders of dahlias, *Rosa* 'Pink Cover' and *Geranium* Rozanne (='Gerwat').

Left bottom A vision in white, as soft, delicate blooms of *Sanguisorba canadensis*, *Dahlia* 'Snowstorm', *Kalimeris pinnatifida* 'Hortensis' and *Ageratina altissima* 'Braunlaub' waft along the aisle, toward topiary *Taxus baccata* sentinels.

Nel and Theej make room for dahlias in every border. Here *D.* 'Classic Elise' rubs shoulders with *Aster x frikartii* 'Mönch' and *Persicaria amplexicaulis* Taurus (='Blotau').

▷ the Dutch Dahlia Society open day and bought a couple of tubers – things just got out of hand." Although Nel and Theej still buy new cultivars, for the past ten years Theej has also propagated dahlias. Despite a modest nature, Theej takes pride in his success: "In June, people travel from all over to buy our dahlias."

The trays in the tiny plot next to the garden are now empty, as is the polytunnel. But adjacent to the polytunnel a narrow strip of land bordering a cornfield is in full bloom, planted with anything and everything that might – or might not – end up in the garden. "This is our larder," says Nel. "And to be honest, it's the part I like best. There is no design, everything is just plonked in willy-nilly and its location allows you to see the plants backlit by the sun."

Without warning, an offhand remark about my grandmother's garden results in a beautiful, arm-filling bouquet, hand-picked from the 'larder', with Michaelmas daisies, *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Silberfeder' and, of course, dahlias. A week later, testament to the love that has been lavished on them, they are still blooming away. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Nel and Theej Verheggen,
Horsterdijk 58,
5973 PP Lottum, the Netherlands.
Tel + 31 7 74 63 15 62.
Website www.tuinverheggen.nl
Open Email tverheggen@ziggo.nl for details.

9 Nel and Theej's favourite dahlias

1 *Dahlia* 'Bora Bora'
This dahlia from the 'Cactus' range is tall stemmed and can reach 1.2m, but does not require much staking, making it ideal for the back of the border. 1.2cm.

2 *D.* 'Oreti Duke'
Perfect for a romantic border in pinks, lilacs and whites. Its miniature pompons attract lots of bees and butterflies. 1.2m.

3 *D.* 'Karma Irene'
Beautiful straight stems, topped by bright reddish-orange flowers. Bred for the cut-flower industry and therefore produces an impressive amount of flowers over a long season. 1.2m.

4 *D.* 'Karma Thalia'
Dark green, serrated foliage with vibrant violet-red flowers. The stem grows perfectly upright with few side branches – plant them quite close together for optimum effect. 1.2m.

5 *D.* 'Mary Evelyn'
A collerette-type flower with a claret outer ring and pale pink inner petals around its yellow heart: not everyone's cup of tea, but definitely unique. This is a very easy, cut-and-come-again variety. 90cm.

6 *D.* 'Classic Elise'
A peony-flowering dahlia in a soft orangy yellow with a hint of pink, contrasting with its bronze leaves. Not only very beautiful in the garden, but also in pots scattered around a terrace. 1.2m.

7 *D.* 'Nuit d'Été' This dahlia is perfect for combinations with grasses. Not only because of its height, but also because its dark red flowers can reach an impressive 12cm in diameter. 90cm.

8 *D.* 'Maxime'
Bi-coloured large flowers with deep red petals edged in a golden yellow. A popular variety that can sell out quickly. 1.2m.

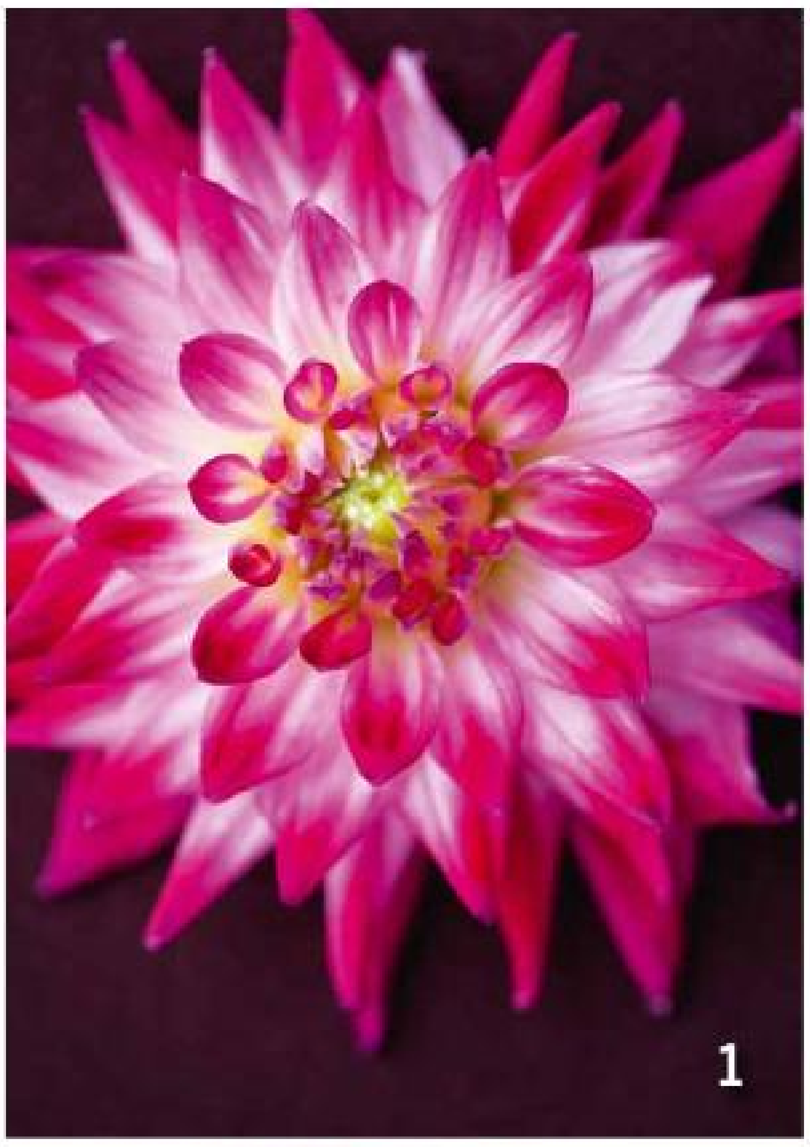
9 *D.* 'Aurora's Kiss'
A very decorative, velvety pompom of the deepest wine crimson, that is so perfect it looks almost unreal. 1.2m.

Top tips for growing dahlias

1 From the beginning of March, grow dahlias in pots in a greenhouse or polytunnel – they need lots of light and a minimum temperature of 17°C. Once the plant has three to four leaves, pinch the top out to encourage the plant to thicken out.

2 Wait until the young plants are approx 35cm high before placing the pots in the garden from June. Don't plant out immediately, so you have ample chance to choose a suitable location and planting combination.

3 Once dug out at the end of the season, lay the tubers upside down for a couple of weeks in a cool, dry place. This allows moisture to drain out and prevents rotting. Then cover the tubers with sand or sawdust and store in wooden crates over winter.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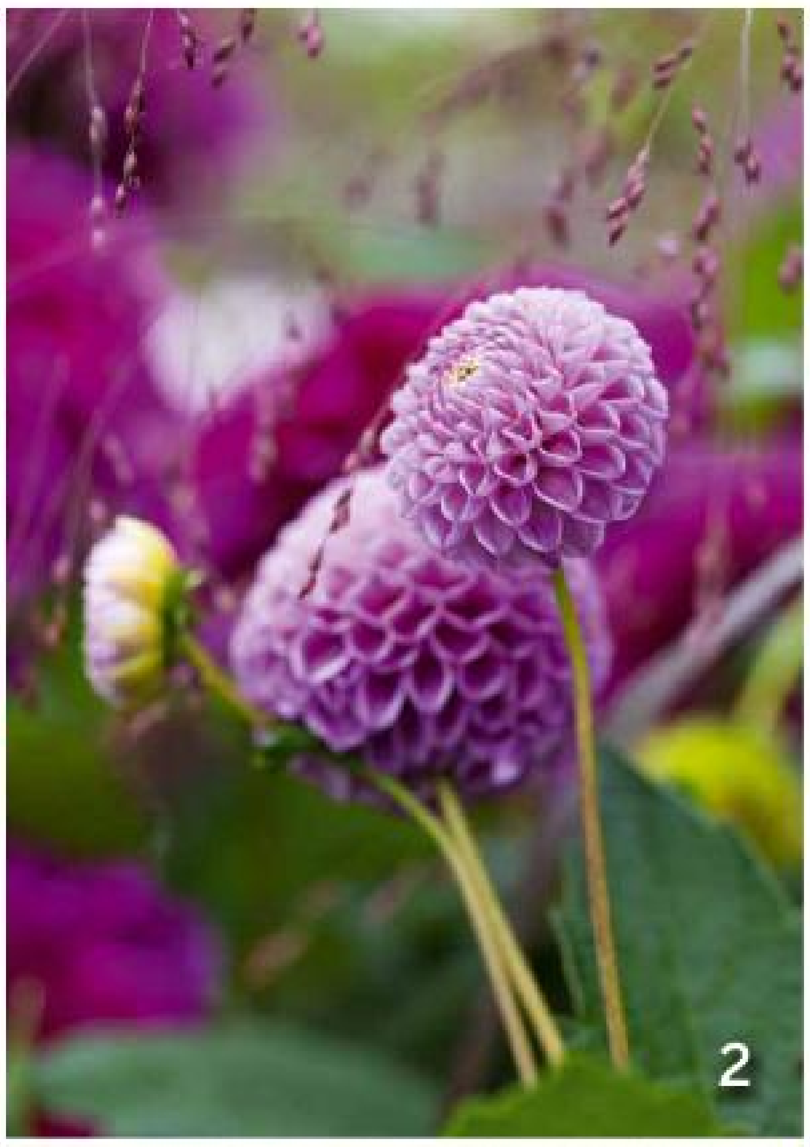
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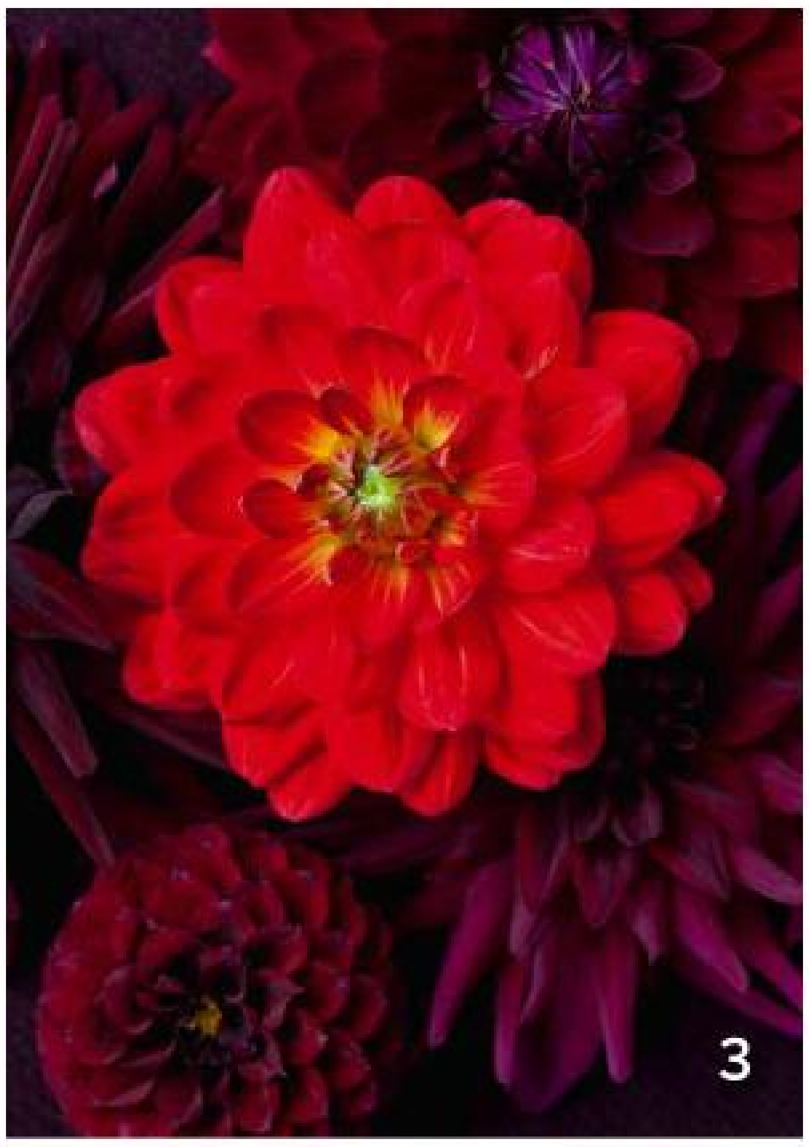
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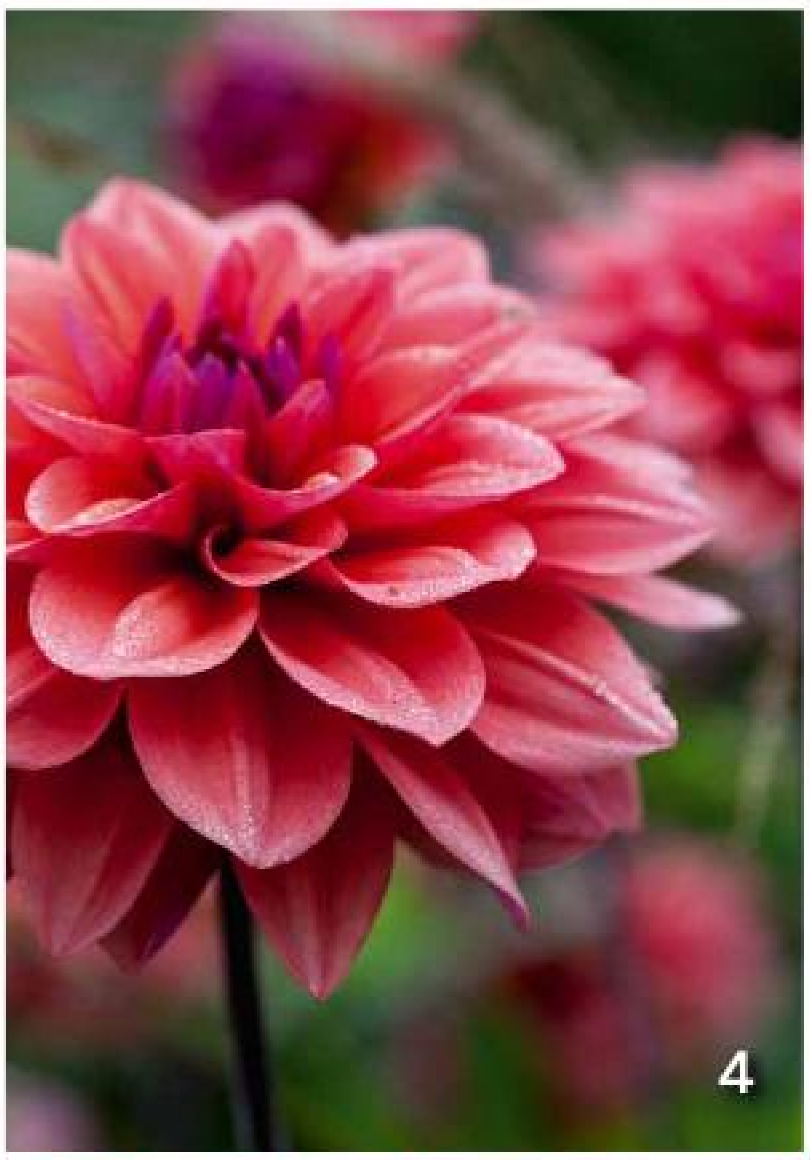
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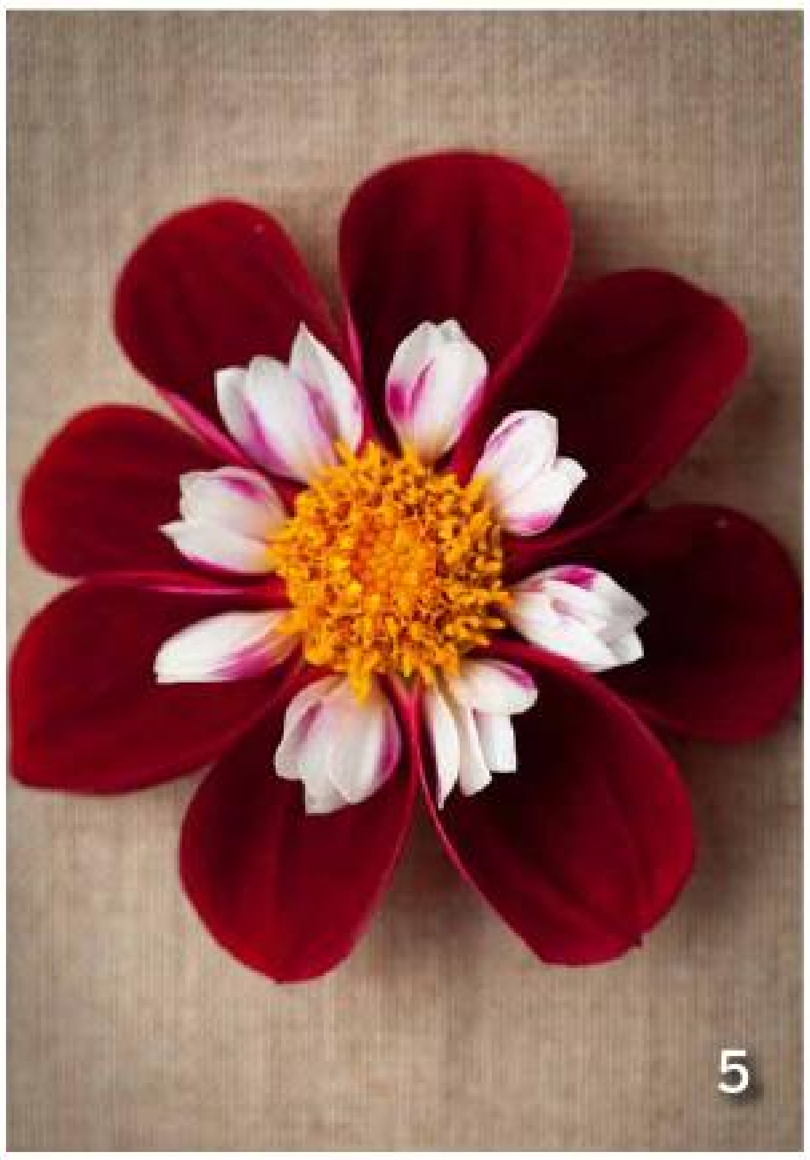
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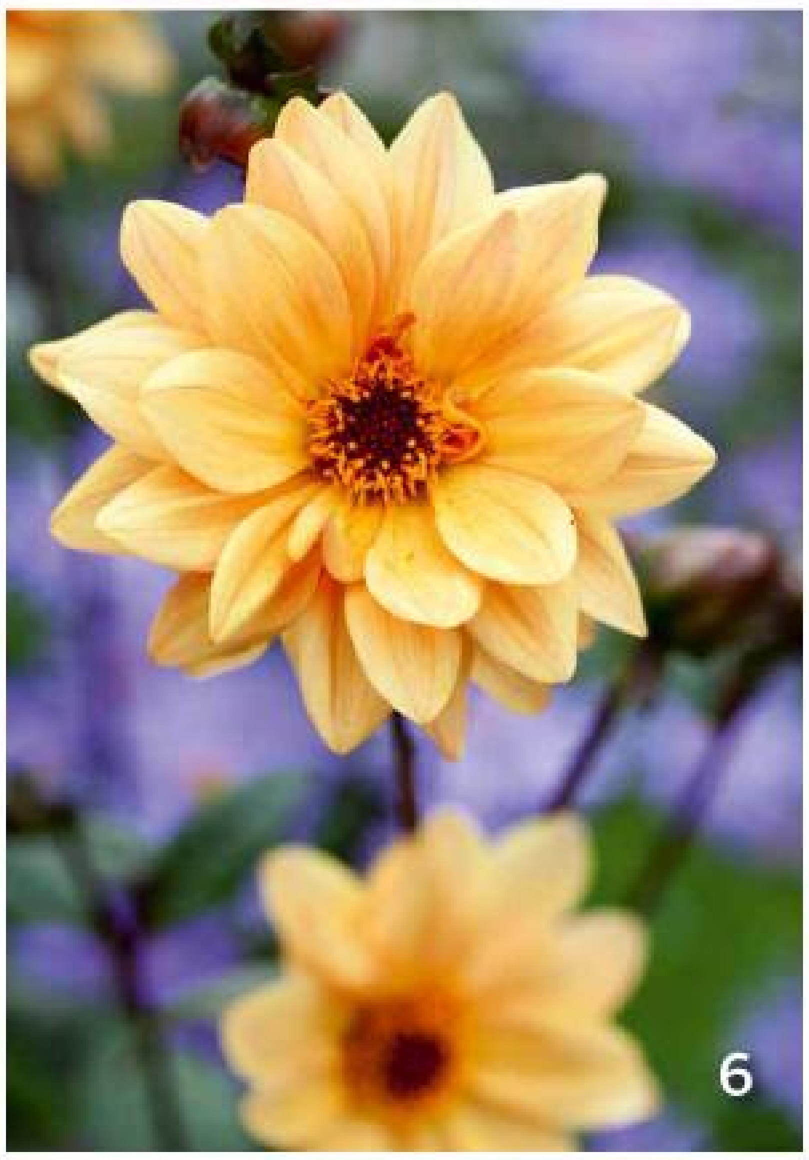
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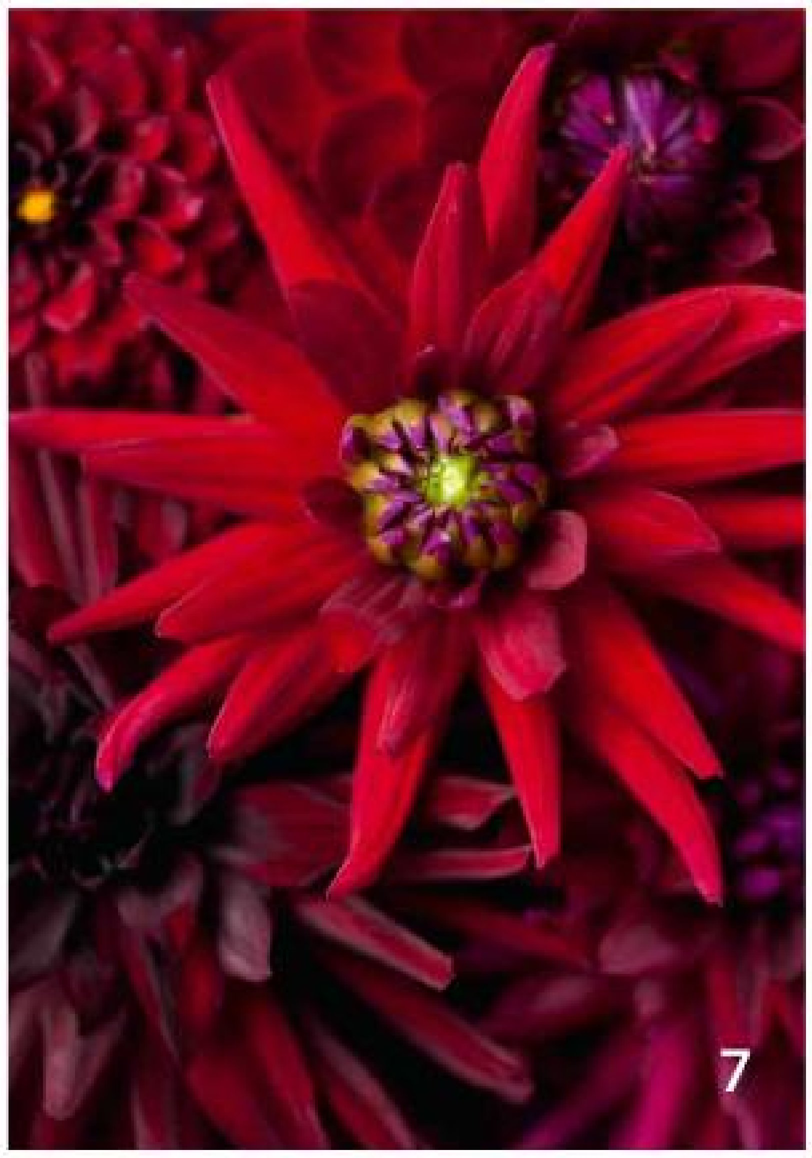
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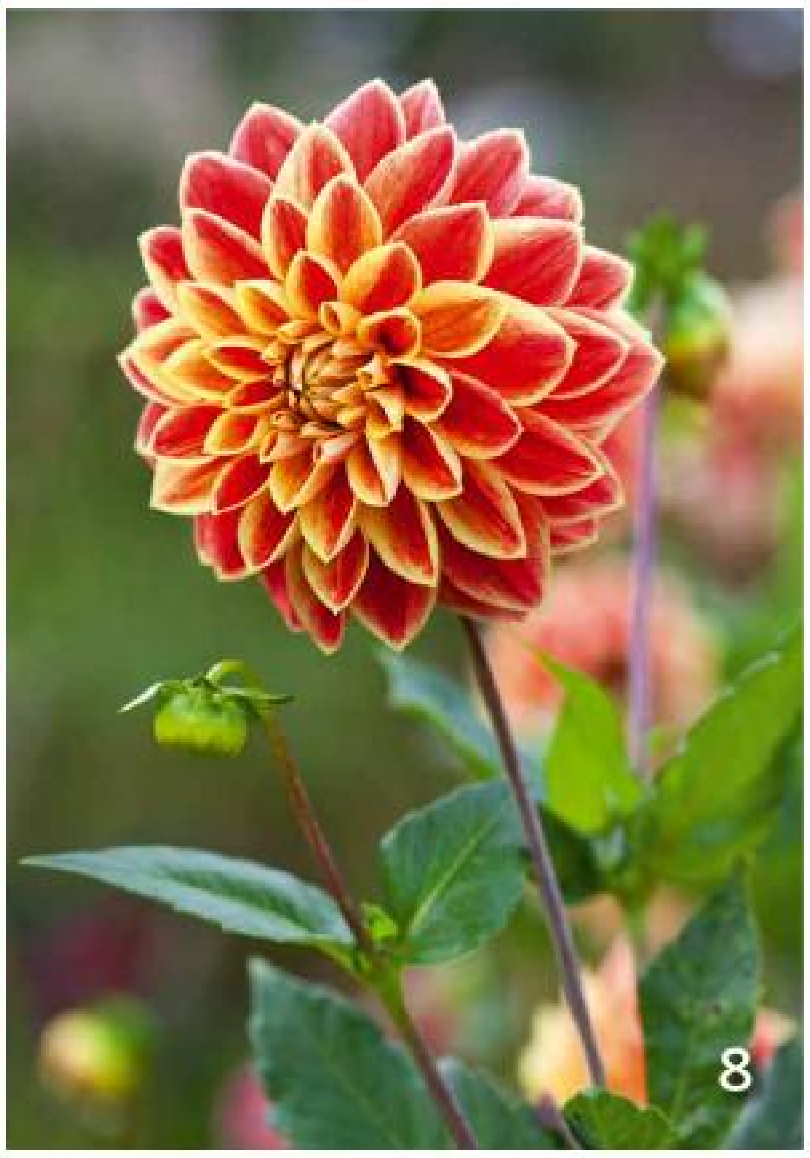
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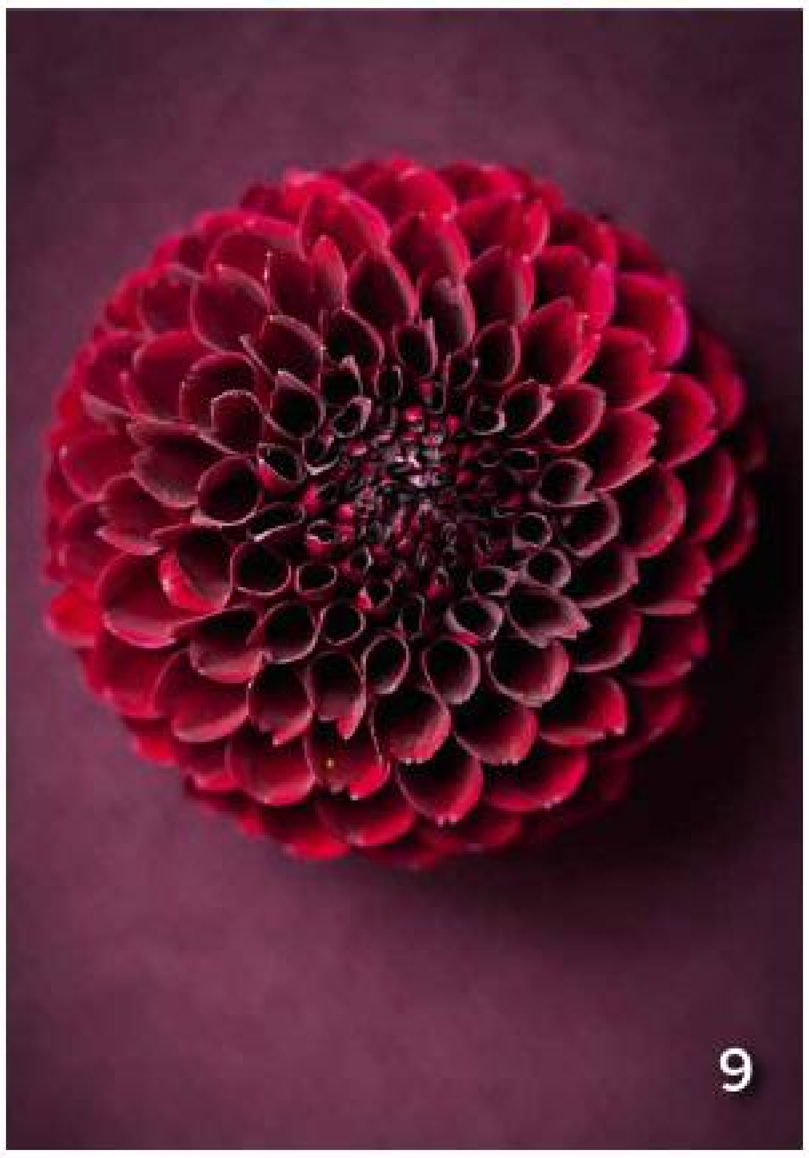
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A LONG WEEKEND IN

Paris

Enjoy a short break to Paris and discover its most charming gardens. In the first of our new series, **John Hoyland** shares his choice of Paris's best green spaces

I'm with Cole Porter. I love Paris every moment of the year. Not for any particular romantic attachment but because, as a gardener, Paris has something to delight me all year round. Put on a pair of good walking shoes and you can wander for hours through the capital's network of squares, parks and gardens, well away from the clamour of the city.

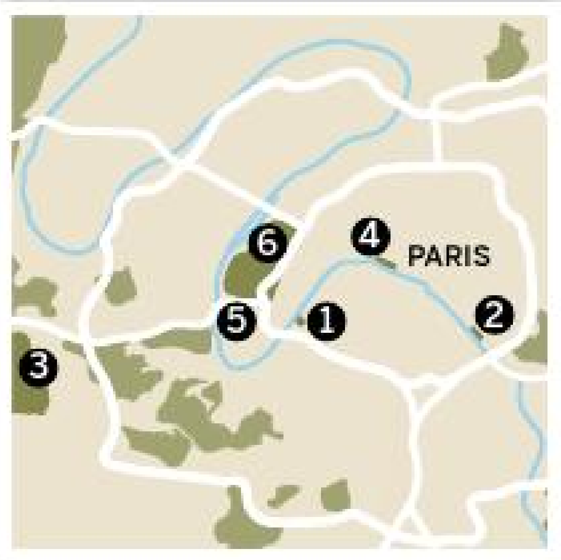
Over the past 20 years the city authorities have invested in the renovation and regeneration of most of Paris's squares, open spaces and public planting schemes meaning that now a stroll along even the busiest thoroughfare can be uplifting.

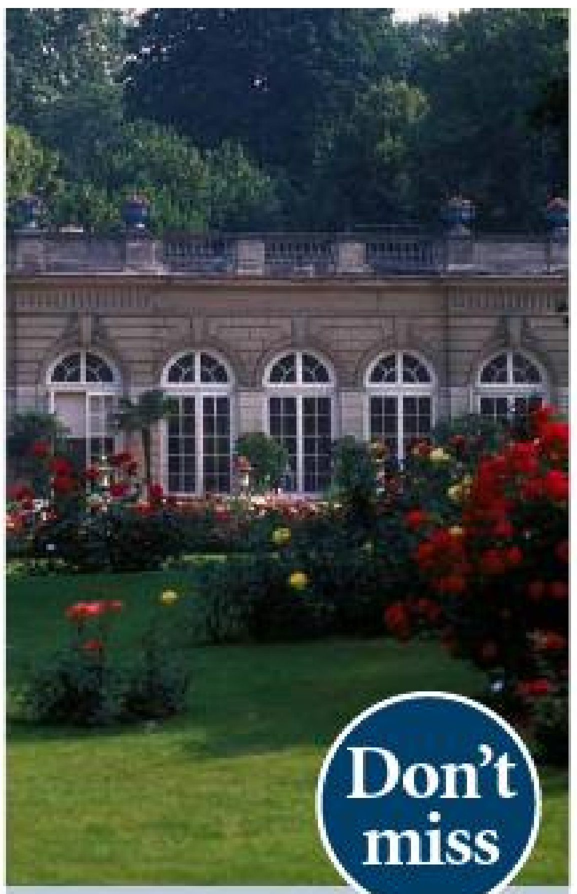
In spring you can't fail to be impressed by paulownias in full flower in the Place d'Italie or on the Avenue Foch. In summer the planting schemes on the Champs-Élysées are exuberant and adventurous. In winter a dusting of snow will transform the Tuileries Garden into a magical place.

SHUTTERSTOCK

Gardens to visit in and around Paris

Springtime, summer, autumn… Paris is a city you can't help but fall in love with at any time of the year – and the same is true of its many beautiful gardens





❻ PARC DE BAGATELLE

If you have time to visit only one garden on your trip, head for this jewel in the Bois de Boulogne's crown. You can meander along wooded walks and expanses of lawn, past grottoes, waterfalls and even a pagoda. But it is the plant collections that will excite gardeners. In spring there are extravagant plantings of tulips and, in one corner, a collection of lilacs. Autumn brings spectacular foliage, but most impressive is summer when over 1,200 varieties of rose are on display.

Website equipement.paris.fr/parc-de-bagatelle-1808
Address Château de Bagatelle, 75016 Paris.

❶ PARC ANDRÉ-CITROËN

Built on the site of an old Citroën factory the garden, designed by Gilles Clément and Alain Provost, was opened in the 1990s to widespread acclaim. The garden is created around a large rectangular lawn bordered by six small gardens that have each been loosely designed around a single colour. The opposite flank of the garden is bordered by a huge canal, with raised walkways leading to two imposing, modern greenhouses. The spirit of this popular park is whimsical and playful, epitomised by a plaza of dancing fountains, but it gets crowded on sunny Sundays.

Website equipement.paris.fr/parc-andre-citroen-1791
Address 2 Rue Cauchy, 75015 Paris.

❷ PARC DE BERCY

A new park, developed during Paris's long period of renovation and renewal in the 1980s and 1990s. Built on the site of several disused wine warehouses, the past is evoked by the incorporation into the paths of the train tracks that were used to transport the wine around; by the planting of a vineyard, and by pergolas covered in vines. There are also rose gardens, scented gardens, a yew maze and a vegetable garden that is tended by local schools. The main lawn is divided into smaller squares in a grid reminiscent of French formal gardens. There is a belvedere on top of a mound from which to view the surrounding garden.

Website equipement.paris.fr/parc-de-bercy-5
Address 128 Quai de Bercy, 75012 Paris.

❸ PALACE OF VERSAILLES

For gardeners more used to intimate garden 'rooms' and billowing herbaceous borders, the gardens at Versailles can initially feel overwhelming. Persevere, because not only are these some of the best-maintained gardens in Europe, but they also provide invaluable lessons in garden design. André Le Nôtre, who created the gardens for Louis XIV at the end of the 17th century, has produced a masterclass in visual tricks, the manipulation of perspective and the use of light and shade that is still pertinent to contemporary garden making. The gardens are a living catalogue of formal topiary shapes, and how to use hedges, statuary and water in the garden. With inspiration at every turn, be prepared to walk for miles to take it all in.

Website en.chateauversailles.fr
Address Château de Versailles, Place d'Armes, 78000 Versailles.
Tel +33 (0)1 30 83 78 00.

❹ JARDIN DES TUILERIES

Laid out by Le Nôtre, the Tuileries Garden is quintessentially French. Today, they're a popular place to promenade, rest in the shade, admire the statues – including work by Giacometti and Moore – or to lounge in one of the garden's iconic metal chairs.

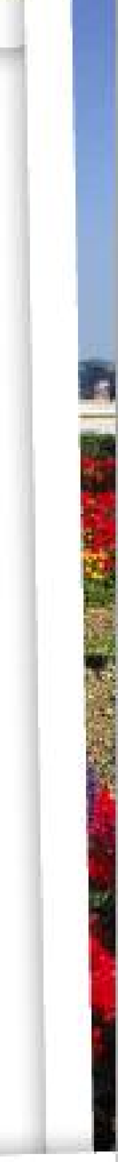
The central axis that leads out from the Louvre is just as it was in Le Nôtre's day. As is the way in which the space is divided up with gravel paths, enclosed areas and a huge octagonal pond. During the 1990s the Tuileries were restored and adapted by landscape architects Louis Benech, Pascal Cribier and François Roubaud who kept the original layout of the garden. In a corner of the garden, near Place de la Concorde, is a specialist gardening bookshop.

Website www.louvre.fr
Address Place de la Concorde, 75001 Paris.
Tel +33 (0)1 40 20 90 43.

❺ JARDINS ALBERT KAHN

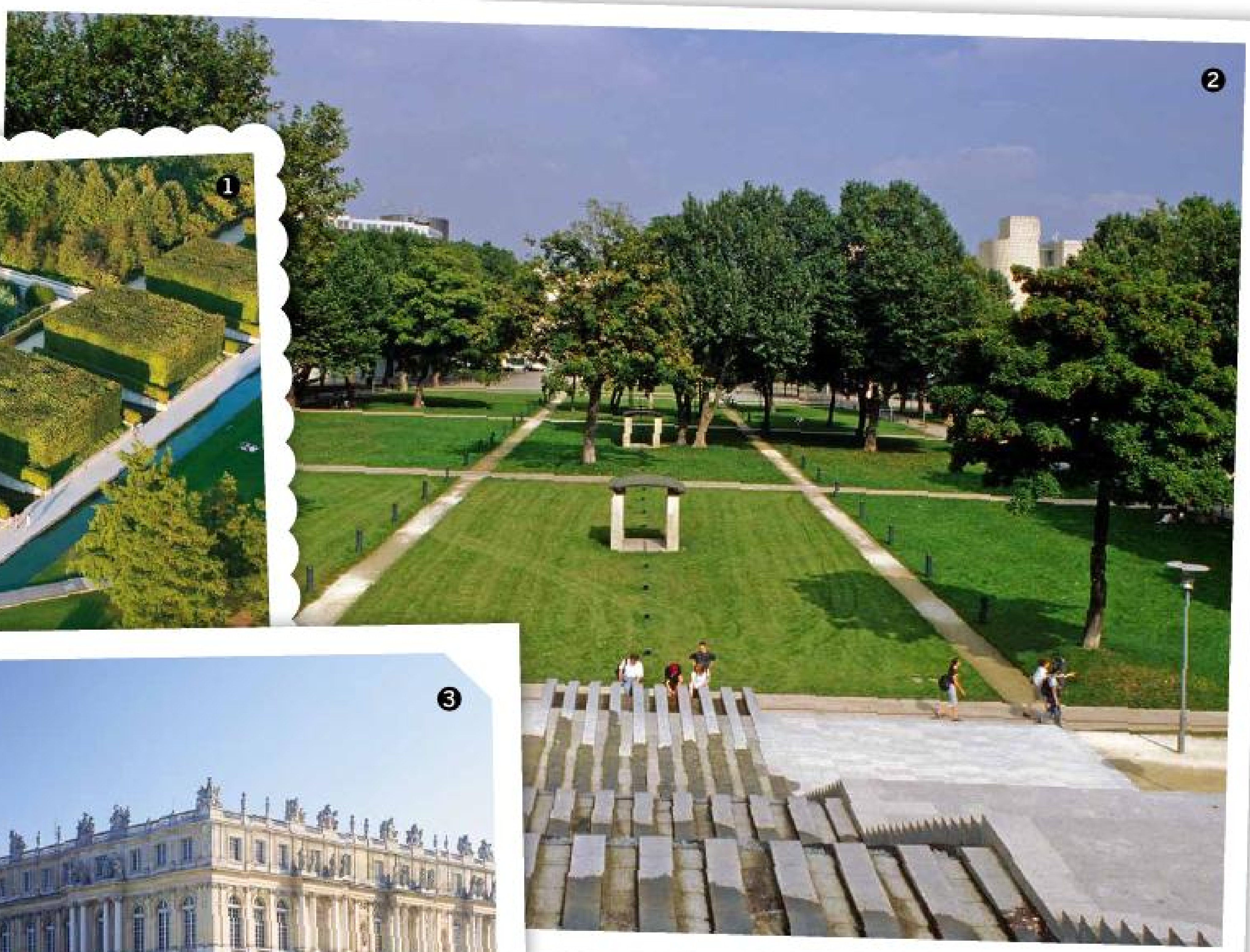
This ten-acre garden on the outskirts of Paris was created at the beginning of the 20th century by the banker and philanthropist Albert Kahn. There are evocations of traditional and contemporary Japanese gardens, of French and English gardens and of European forests. The layout and planting cleverly optimises the space and the gardens feel far larger than their ten acres. Particularly spectacular in spring, when the cherry trees are in blossom, the gardens also house the Albert Kahn photography museum.

Website www.albert-kahn.hauts-de-seine.net
Address 10-14, rue du Port, 92100 Boulogne-Billancourt.
Tel + 33 (0)1 55 19 28 00.



1&4 DAVID LEFRANC, 2 JAQUES LEBAR, 6 DAVID LEFEUVRE.
ALL FROM PARIS TOURIST OFFICE 3 CHADEHLERS / ALAMY, 5 PHOTOS 12 / ALAMY

❶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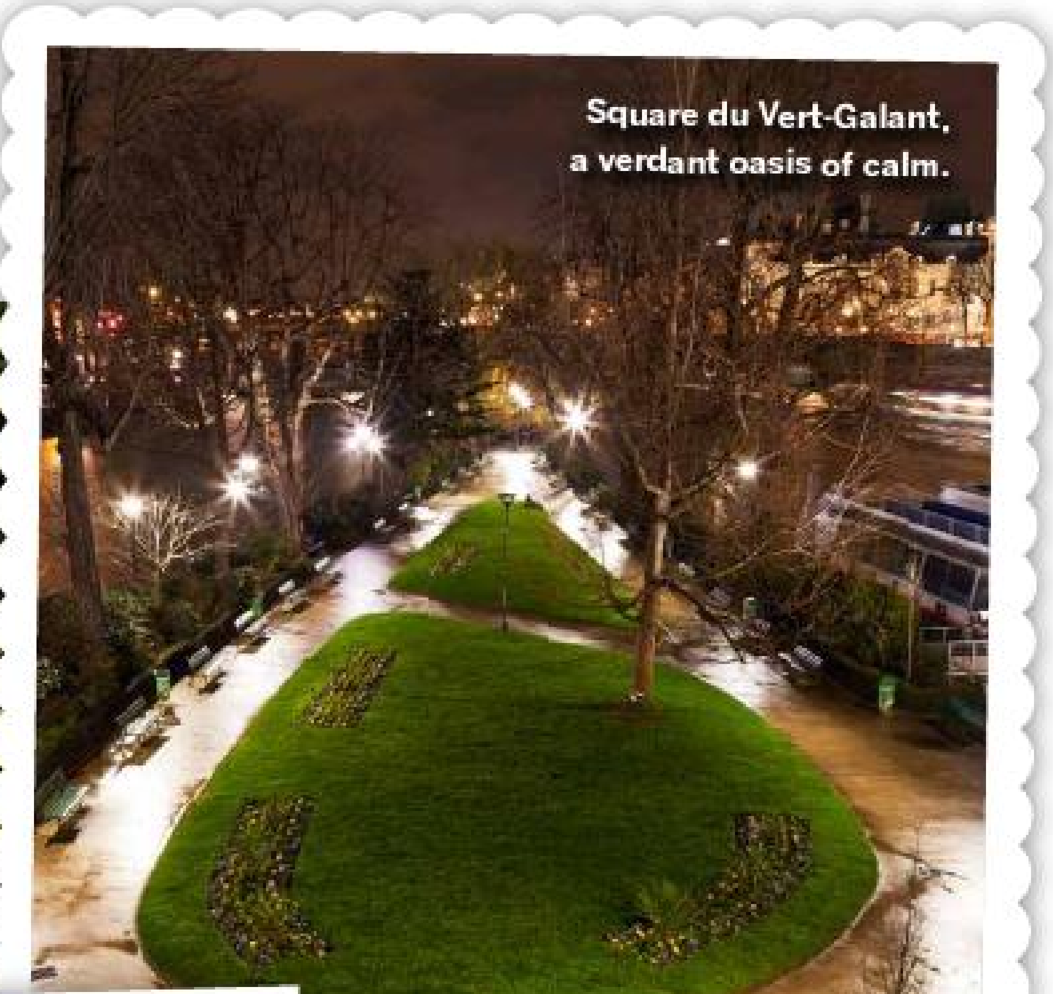
Other places to visit

Make sure you also make time for Paris's last surviving flower market and some of the city's hidden green gems

AU BORD
Tél. 43

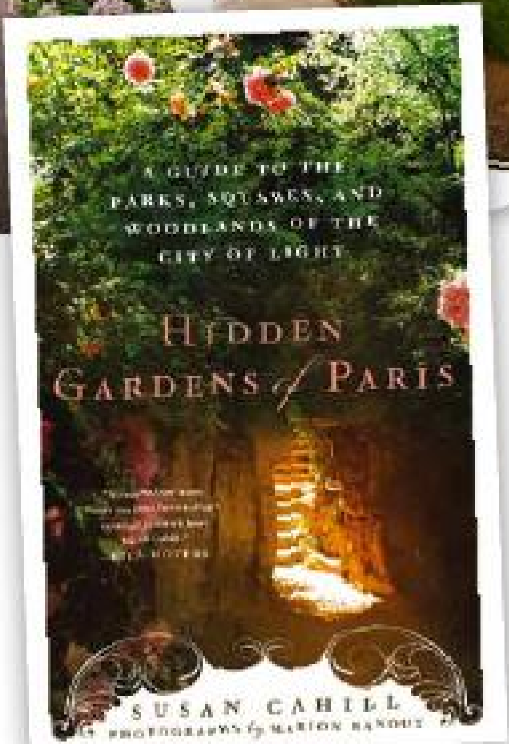
Flower market on the Île de la Cité.



Square du Vert-Galant, a verdant oasis of calm.

The Île Saint-Louis and the adjacent Île de la Cité are among my favourite parts of Paris, and on the Île de la Cité, a short walk from Nôtre-Dame Cathedral, is the last of Paris's neighbourhood **flower markets**. A Parisian institution since 1820, the market sells not only cut flowers but plants of all types for growing on terraces and balconies. It is charming and captivating, even if you are not planning to buy plants.

At the western tip of the island is a quiet oasis, the **Square du Vert-Galant**, a tiny park that gives beautiful views along the Seine towards the Louvre. It is one of hundreds of small neighbourhood squares and parks that are often tucked away and off the beaten track. During his time as mayor of the city Jacques Chirac began a restoration programme that has been continued by his successors. One of my favourites is the **Jardin de la Vallée Suisse**, with its dense plantation of weeping beeches, pools and comfortable benches, which is as calm as its name suggests – and just a stone's throw from the Champs-Élysées. Every neighbourhood has its own squares and parks, and one of the best ways to discover them is to join a **walking tour of gardens**, such as those organised by www.paris-walking-tours.com.


A GUIDE TO THE PARKS, SQUARES, AND WOODLANDS OF THE CITY OF LIGHT
HIDDEN GARDENS of PARIS
SUSAN CAHILL
PHOTOGRAPHS by MARION BANDOU

BOOK OFFER
Hidden Gardens of Paris by Susan Cahill (St Martin's Griffin, £14.99), lists 75 of the city's gardens and is available to readers for £13.99, including p&p. See page 99 for details.

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED TOUR
John Hoyland and editor Juliet Roberts will be leading a tour in October 2014 to some of Paris's garden highlights, plus a visit to the popular autumn plant fair at Courson. Register your interest on 01341 241717.

Need to know

WHEN TO GO
Most Paris gardens are at their flowering peak in spring and early summer, but there is much to interest gardeners throughout the year, even in the dead of winter, when Paris's formal gardens reveal their architecture.

HOW TO GET THERE
Eurostar trains link the centres of London and Paris in a little over two hours. www.eurostar.com. Easyjet and British Airways have regular flights from London and regional airports to Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport. www.easyjet.com www.ba.com

FIND OUT MORE
The Paris tourism website (en.parisinfo.com) has information on transport accommodation, and events in the city. You can find out more about the city's history and culture at the Mairie de Paris website: www.paris.fr

Plant fairs near Paris

Both of France's major plant fairs are held close to Paris. **Saint-Jean de Beauregard** (www.domsaintjeanbeauregard.com) and **Courson** (www.domaine-de-courson.fr) were originally inspired by British plant fairs but their relaxed style has now recrossed the Channel to inspire some British fairs. Saint-Jean de Beauregard focuses on plants and practical, hands-on gardening, and attracts specialist nurseries from throughout Europe. The event is held around the beautifully planted ornamental kitchen garden. Courson has become a chic affair, with stylish displays of garden furniture, ornament and decoration as well as plants. Both events take place twice a year, in spring and autumn. A relative newcomer to the French garden fair scene is **Jardins, Jardin** (www.jardinsjardin.com), a design-focused event, held at the end of May on the terraces above the Tuileries Garden.

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The Itinerary

Day 1 - London or Manchester to Cork. Fly by scheduled flight from your chosen airport. Drive to the Parknasilla Hotel, Sneem. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner this evening.

Day 2 - Derreen Gardens & Beara Peninsula. After breakfast depart on a morning drive to Derreen Gardens. Designed and planted by the fifth Marquis of Lansdowne in the 1870s, it is now owned and managed by his great-grandson, David Bigham, and his wife Anthea. Derreen is famous for its tree ferns as well as azaleas and rhododendrons. Enjoy the magnificent views across Kilmackillogue Harbour to the Caha Mountains before we return to the hotel for a few hours of relaxation. In the late afternoon there will be a performance by London Festival Opera followed by afternoon tea.

Day 3 - Derrynane House & Kenmare. This morning visit Derrynane House, the ancestral home of Daniel O'Connell. In the afternoon a bus transfer will be provided to the local town of Kenmare for time to explore and shop at leisure.

Day 4 - Garnish Island & Bantry House. Drive over the mountains to Bantry Bay on a full day excursion that will include a morning visit to Garnish Island and the beautiful Ilnacullin Gardens. The sheltered position and Gulf Stream is favourable to the growth of ornamental plants, many normally only found in sub-tropical or Mediterranean climates. Continue to Bantry House, overlooking Bantry Bay. We will explore the house, one of the finest historic houses in Ireland along with the gardens. After lunch, London Festival Opera will perform in one of the grand rooms.

Day 5 - Parknasilla Resort. It would be unforgivable to come to such a place as this and not have a complete day to enjoy the hotel and its extensive grounds. For the energetic there will be a choice of a guided short or long walk through the grounds and along the coast. Otherwise, relax with a good book in one of the many vantage points scattered throughout the grounds.

Day 6 - Lakes of Killarney & Muckross House. Morning excursion to the Killarney National Park and the house and gardens of Muckross House. Tour the gardens or house which was once owned by the Herbert family who entertained Queen Victoria here in 1861. The setting by the lake shore with its mountain backdrop is stunning. Afternoon at leisure. In the late afternoon London Festival Opera will perform their farewell concert followed by afternoon tea.

Day 7 - Cork to London or Manchester. Transfer to the airport for your return scheduled flight to your chosen airport.

Parknasilla Resort

Situated in 500 acres, Parknasilla Resort is located in the middle of some of Kerry's finest scenery. Here you will find interesting walks, tiny sandy coves and beach huts for those who wish to swim in the sea. Once a grand house, Parknasilla has grown gracefully into her life as a hotel. The ground floor of the original main house is where you will find a number of delightful sitting rooms, all offering wonderful views. Here also is the Pygmalion dining room where gourmet food is provided using many locally sourced fine meats and fish. The accommodation in the main house is either superior grade or suites which are furnished with antique furniture and luxurious fabrics. The standard rooms are in a newer wing as are the recently added modern style suites. The health spa with a magnificent swimming pool is a new addition and the views from the pool across the sea have to be seen to be believed.

Prices and Inclusions

Prices per person based on double occupancy range from £1695 for a standard room to £2295 for a suite. Prices for sole use from £1895.

Price Includes: Economy class return scheduled air travel from London or Manchester, six nights at the Parknasilla Resort with full Irish breakfast and dinner from a la carte menu daily, two afternoon teas at Parknasilla Resort, guided excursions, performances in the Parknasilla Resort and Bantry Bay House by London Festival Opera, tour managers, transfers, airport taxes.

NB. Travel insurance, lunches and gratuities are not included in the price. Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.

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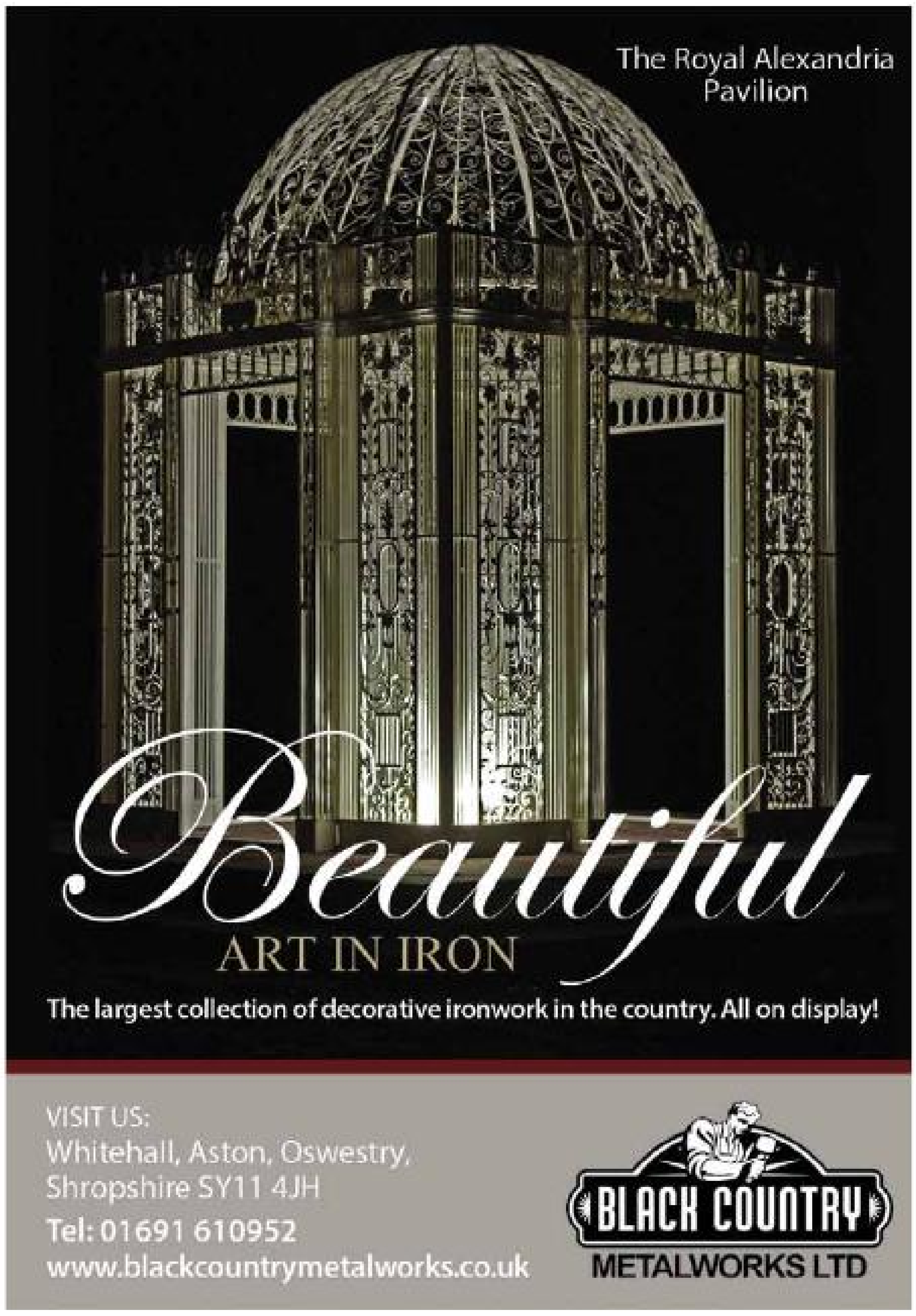

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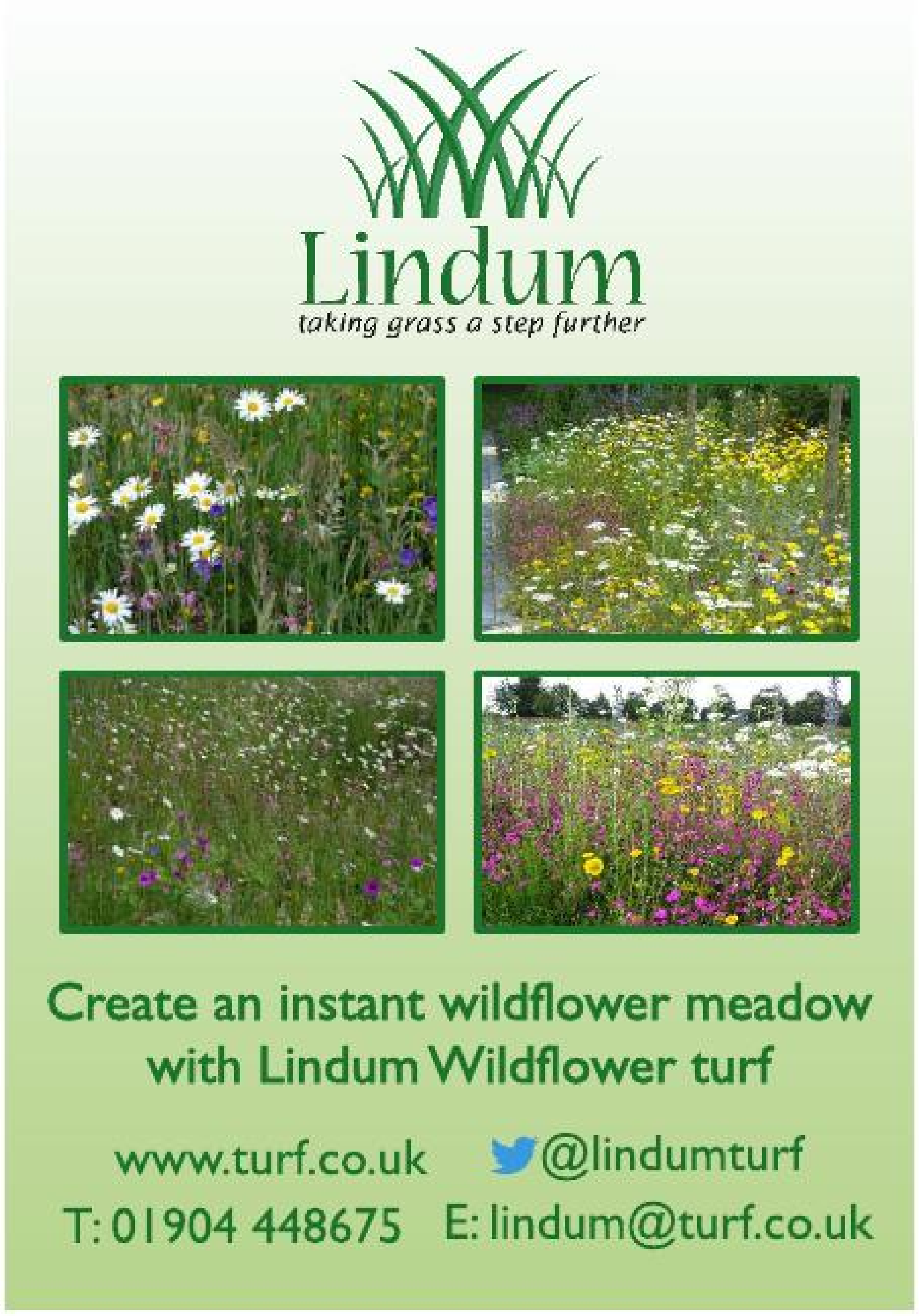

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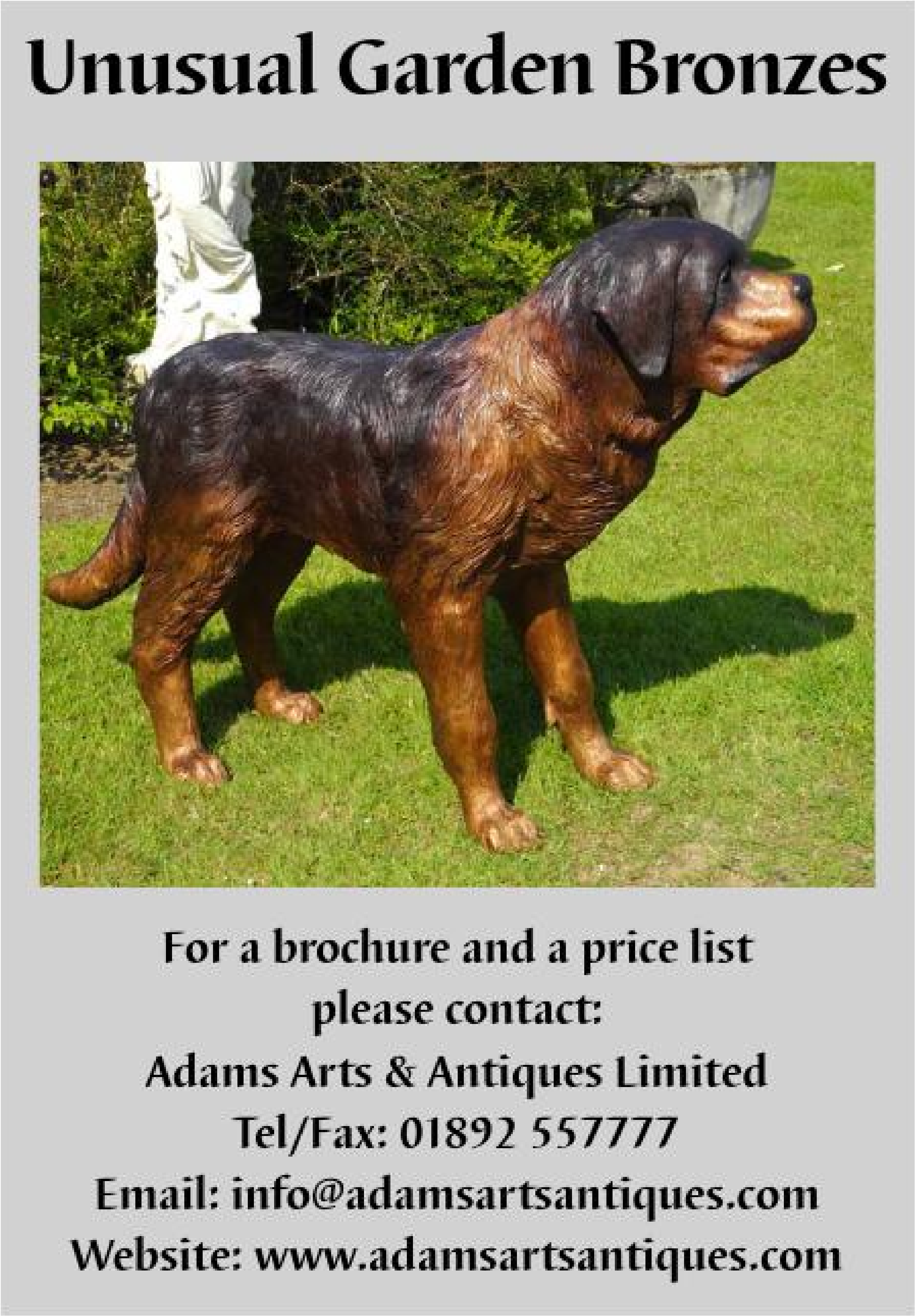

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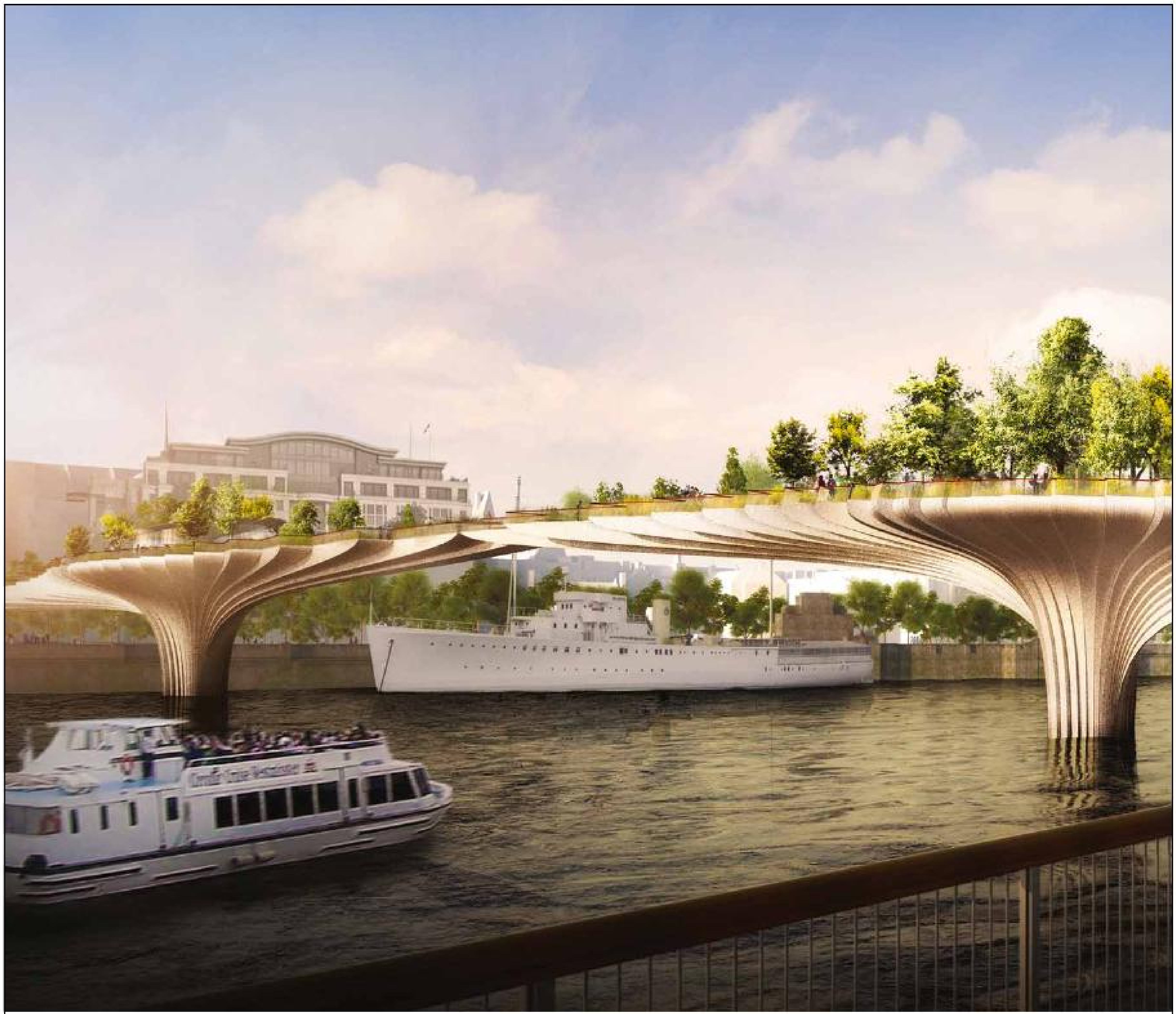

PROPOSAL

Garden bridge

Dan Pearson Studio has been appointed as Landscape Design Consultant for an exciting new pedestrian bridge being developed by Thomas Heatherwick Studio and ARUP with Transport for London. The proposal for The Garden Bridge aims to create a green link across the Thames, from the Southbank to Temple. The 360m bridge has a cantilever construction designed to minimise impact on the river both from navigation and environmental perspectives.

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News

COMPILED BY **ANNIE GATTI**

A monograph of the landscape design work of Connecticut-based firm Doyle Herman Design Associates reveals designs grounded in the European country house tradition, combined with contemporary elements, such as artwork. Plans are provided. The Landscape Designs of Doyle Herman Design Associates, *Images Publishing (www. imagespublishing.com).*

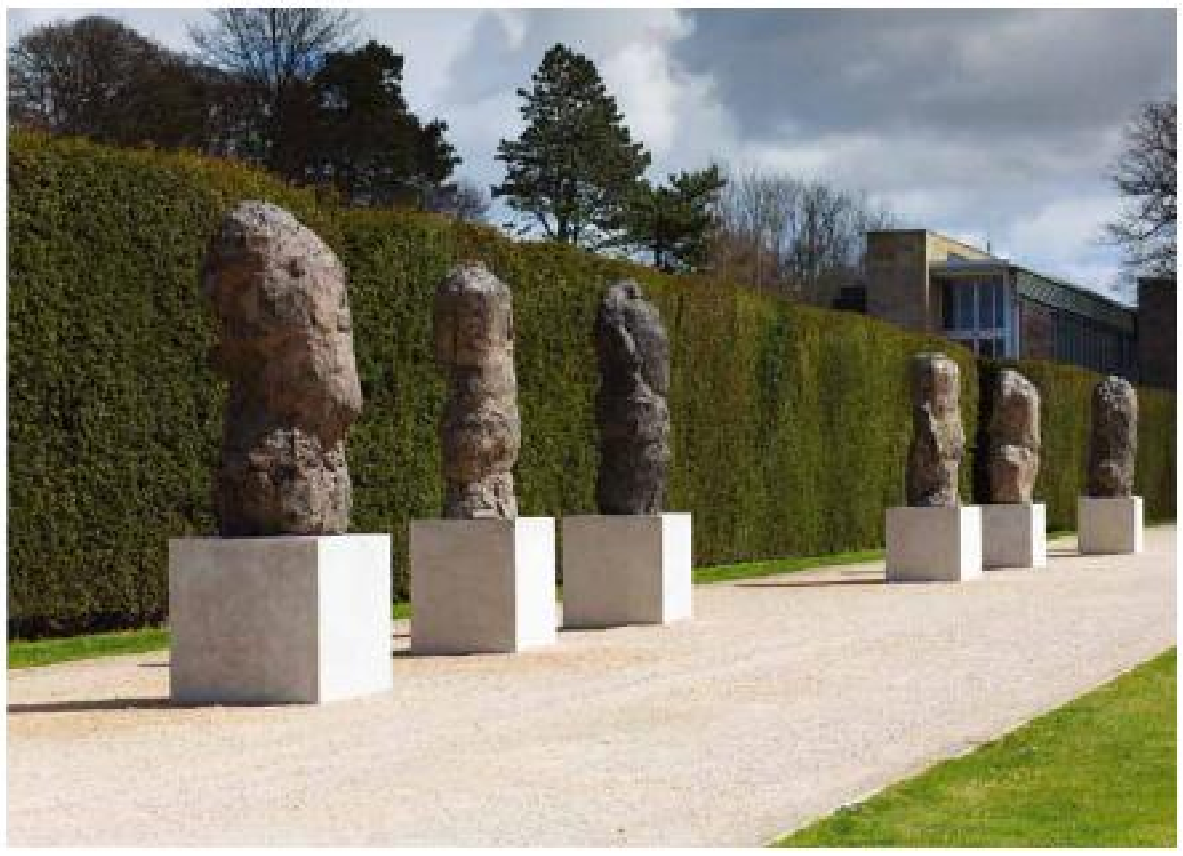
URBAN LANDCAPE AWARD

The Topos Landscape Award 2013 is given this month to German landscape architect Peter Latz, renowned for his inspirational brownfield conversion, the Duisburg-Nord Landscape Park. In 2012 Latz + Partner also won first prize in the international competition to re-design St Peter's Square in Manchester.

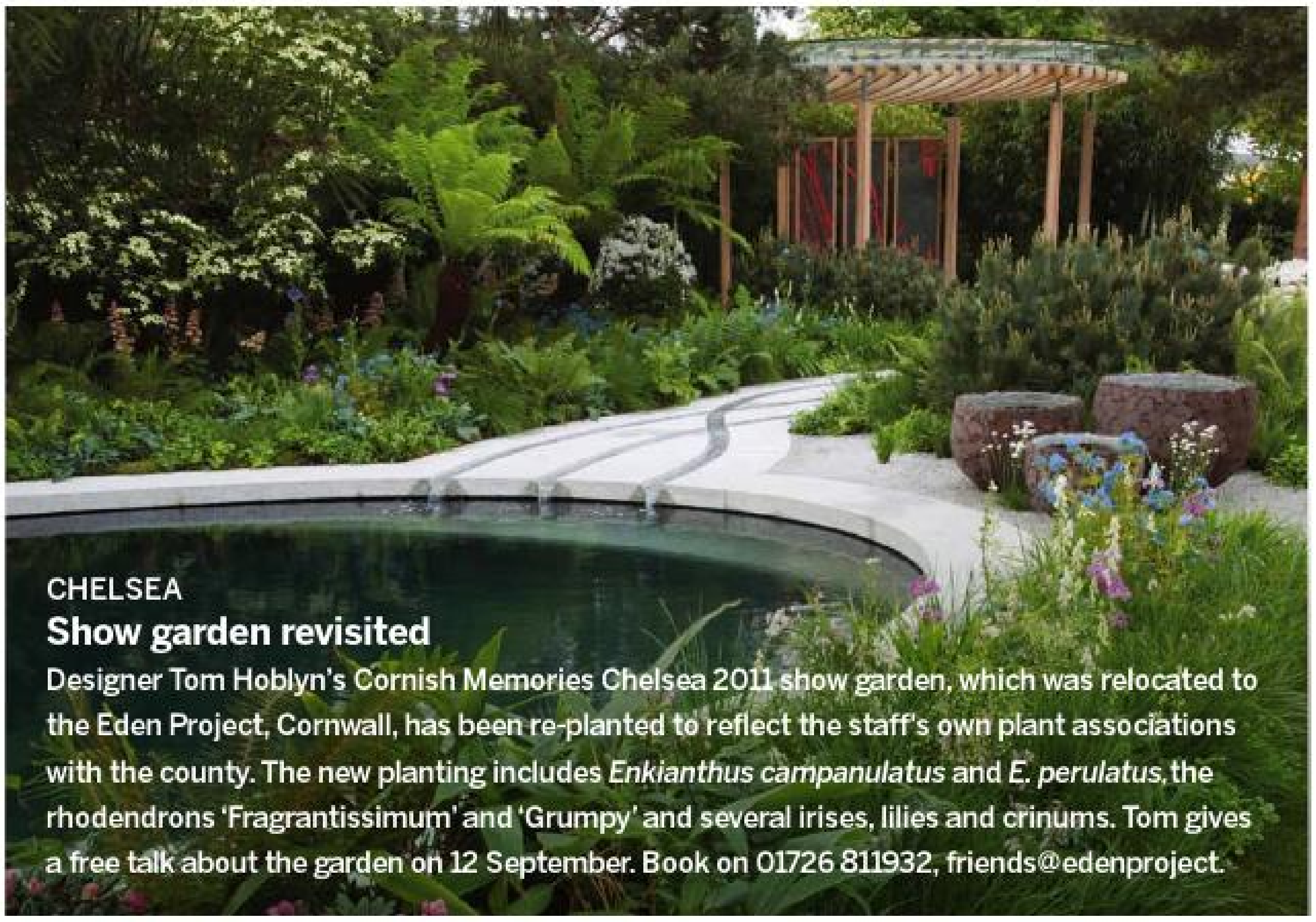
EXHIBITION

Prehistoric-style forms

Earthy, sensual sculptures of the human form by the late Zurich-based artist Hans Josephsohn (1920-2012) are currently on view at Yorkshire Sculpture Park. The sculptor drew inspiration from prehistoric relics and made a series of reclining figures in the 1970s, returning to the subject in the 1990s. The exhibition continues until 5 January 2014. www.ysp.co.uk



DOYLE HERMAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES: MARION BRENNER; DUISBURG-NORD LANDSCAPE PARK: CHRISTA PANICK; HANS JOSEPHSOHN SCULPTURES COURTESY OF YSP: JONTY WILDE



CHELSEA

Show garden revisited

Designer Tom Hoblyn's Cornish Memories Chelsea 2011 show garden, which was relocated to the Eden Project, Cornwall, has been re-planted to reflect the staff's own plant associations with the county. The new planting includes *Enkianthus campanulatus* and *E. perulatus*, the rhodendrons 'Fragrantissimum' and 'Grumpy' and several irises, lilies and crinums. Tom gives a free talk about the garden on 12 September. Book on 01726 811932, friends@edenproject.

GARDEN LIGHTING

Evening atmosphere

Bring subtle directional light to the evening garden with the Kew Wall Mounted light (from £171.66, pictured left), which uses energy-efficient LED lamps and has a powder-coated bronze finish. Can be used as a downlight or uplight. Alternatively, to create a romantic, twinkling effect hang clusters of tubular perforated copper Starliters (from £66.33), available in three lengths. Also available in black. Both lights from John Cullen. Tel 020 7371 9000, www.johncullenlighting.co.uk

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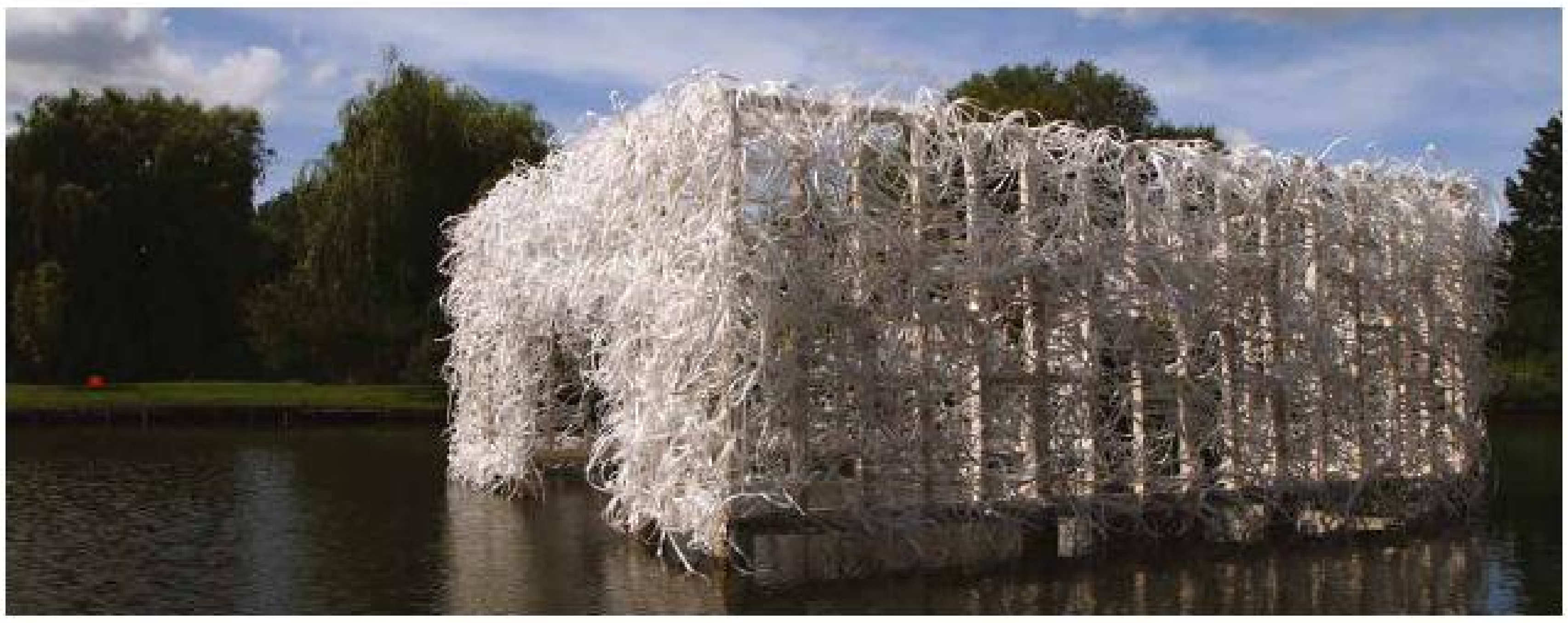

INSTALLATIONS

Cultural identity

Art, Cities and Landscape is a festival of installations, artworks and temporary gardens by young designers in both the French town of Amiens and King's Lynn in Norfolk. Ten projects have been installed in Amiens, including Deborah Nagan and Kate Jackson-Hulme's floating hortus conclusus (pictured above), where suspended plants grow down towards the water, and Brighton-based PIP Partnership's *Hydrophone*, a telephone box in a reed bed that doubles as an observation hide of the aquatic world. Six projects in King's Lynn include sculpted earthmounds in The Walks (the town's historic park) and a pop-up garden in a disused car park at Purfleet Place. Until October. www.artcitieslandscape.com

Notebook

- **A Designer's Life** is the theme of the Society of Garden Designers' autumn conference, which takes place in London on 16 November. Designers Jinny Blom, Andy Sturgeon, Brita von Schoenaich, Ian Smith and Debbie Roberts are the key speakers. Discounted tickets are available until 27 September. www.sgd.org.uk
- **A new part-time Diploma in Garden Design** that teaches the principles and practices of garden design, including business skills, starts this month at Inchbald School of Design in London. The course runs on two days a week for a year, and guest lecturers include Luciano Giubbilei, John Brookes, Anthony Paul and Andrew Duff. Details on 020 7630 9011, sharon@inchbald.co.uk
- **The English Gardening School** has returned to the Chelsea Physic Garden where its one-year Good Gardening Diploma starts this month. A new, ten-week intensive course in Garden Design, starts in January 2014. Tel 020 7352 4347, www.englishgardeningschool.co.uk
- **Nigel Dunnett** gives a one-day course on 'Creating a Pictorial Annual Meadow' at Perch Hill Farm, Sarah Raven's Garden and Cookery School in East Sussex, on 1 October. Book at www.sarahraven.com
- **Book now for the Landscape Institute's 2013** Jellicoe Lecture on the design of the Eden Project by the garden's landscape architect Dominic Cole, which will be given on site, on 8 November. www.landscapeinstitute.org

TOM HOBLYN GARDEN: PAUL DEBOIS; FLOATING HORTUS CONCLUSUS: DEBORAH NAGAN

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Private lives

Gardens should be small oases of calm, hidden from neighbours' prying eyes, but how to achieve this without invoking leylandii rage?

WORDS **ANNIE GUILFOYLE**

Annie Guilfoyle is Director of Garden Design at KLC School of Design. She is also Garden Course Co-ordinator at West Dean College and runs her own garden design studio.

We live in a densely populated world where the desire for privacy is greater than ever. The garden is often the place we turn to for peace and quiet but how do you achieve a sense of privacy, especially if the garden is surrounded by buildings and overlooked by others? Sometimes it is impossible to completely screen it off from the outside world, so be realistic about what is achievable. Maybe strike a balance between having some seclusion yet allowing reasonable light into the garden to enable healthy plant growth and somewhere to sit and enjoy the sun?

Simply surrounding the garden with fortress-like walls is not necessarily the answer, as there are height restrictions on boundary fences and walls. It is wise to consult your local council to find out exactly what restrictions apply in your area. In the UK the maximum boundary height is two metres and considerably lower if the fence adjoins a public highway. If you live in a conservation area check to see if there are other restrictive covenants that apply, such as a 'hedge only and no fence' rule.

High life

Hedges have no height restrictions; however there is a system in place whereby neighbours can register complaints if they believe a 'high hedge' is affecting the enjoyment of their home or garden. So when planning a hedge it is extremely important you think about the growth rate and the care that is needed to keep it in good order. You are responsible for the care of your hedge and action can be taken against you if your hedge is more than two metres in height and deemed to be a nuisance.

If the boundaries don't provide you with enough seclusion then why not consider screening off an area within the garden. A well-positioned tree especially an evergreen, such as *Eriobotrya japonica*, could offer sufficient cover. An arbour or pergola covered with climbers can provide just the right amount of covering for a table and chairs. If space allows, then why not plant some internal hedges to create a 'room'. Pleached trees are a very popular way of making a vertical, elevated hedge; alternatively trees such as *Platanus* x *acerifolia* can be trained horizontally creating an umbrella-like canopy providing shade and privacy. Mature pleached trees can be expensive but you do achieve an instant effect.

A patio or terrace enclosed by generous beds filled with towering perennials and tall grasses can feel extremely private. It is surprising how easily you can forget all about the outside world when surrounded by nothing but magnificent plants.

NEXT MONTH Green roofs

1 Creating cover

One of the best ways of increasing the privacy in a city garden where you may be overlooked by neighbouring houses; is to plant 'umbrella-trained' trees. These white mulberries arranged in a square pattern provide a delightful canopy of foliage in the summer and offer architectural interest in the winter.

MARIANNE MAJERUS

2 Framed

A simple painted frame in either metal or wood offers a contemporary structure that is perfect for training climbers. Trees positioned along the boundary will add privacy, but take care not to plant anything that may cause problems in the future by growing far too large, too quickly.

3 Overhead canopy

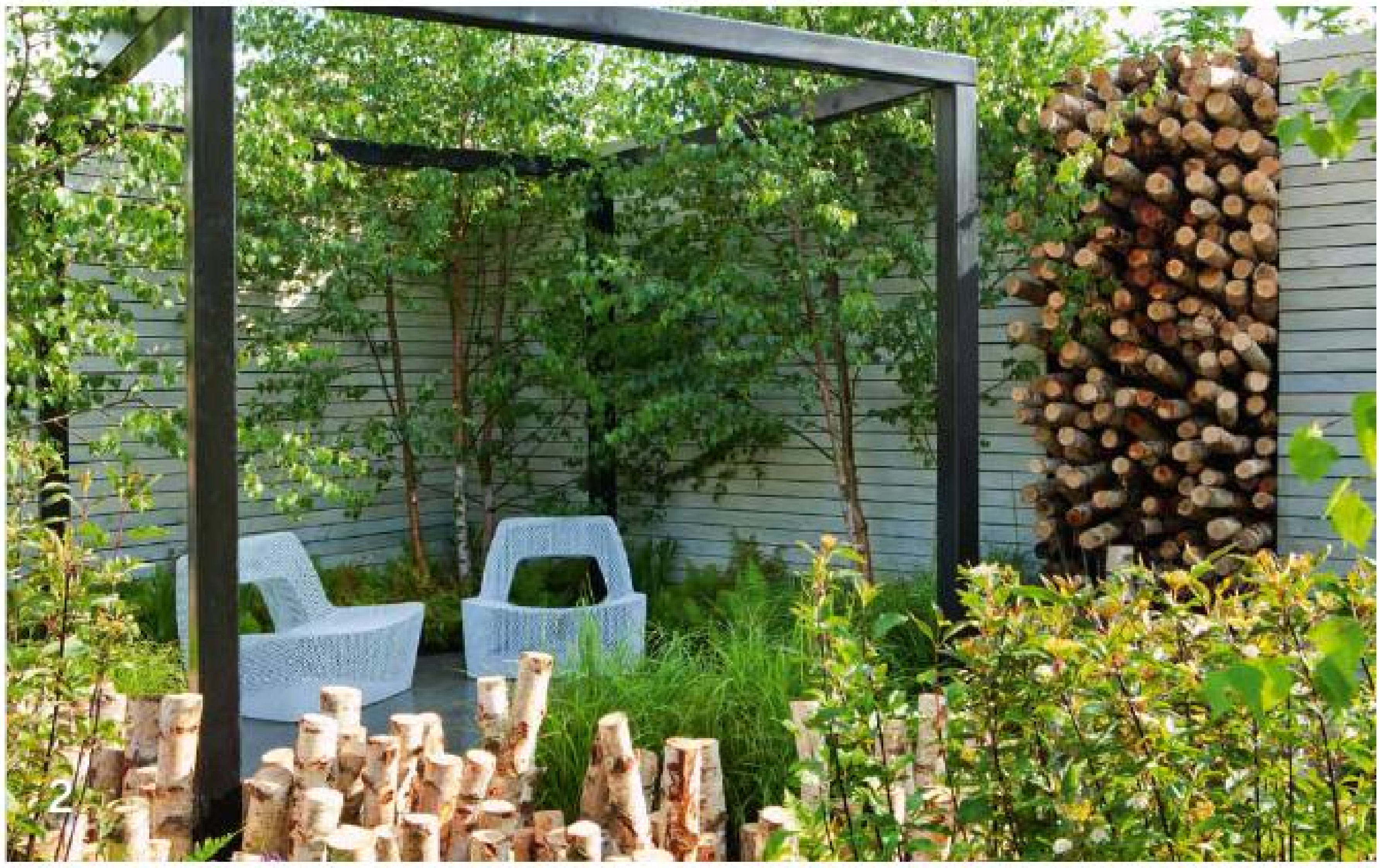
Sails suspended over a seating area not only increase the privacy factor but will give shade from the summer sun. Depending on the materials and colours you choose, you can create a contemporary or colonial feel in the garden. Being temporary structures, they are ideally suited to rooftop gardens.

4 Evergreen screen

Ivy growing in containers has been trained on to vertical wires providing an extremely effective, evergreen screen. This combination would be appropriate where space is limited, for example on a roof garden or balcony. Ivy would also work very well in a shady situation where other plants may struggle.

5 Living arbour

Willow is the perfect plant for creating a living arbour; it grows very easily but also rather quickly and may require very regular trimming back. The young shoots are flexible and can be woven in as it grows, thickening the sides of the arbour and increasing the privacy.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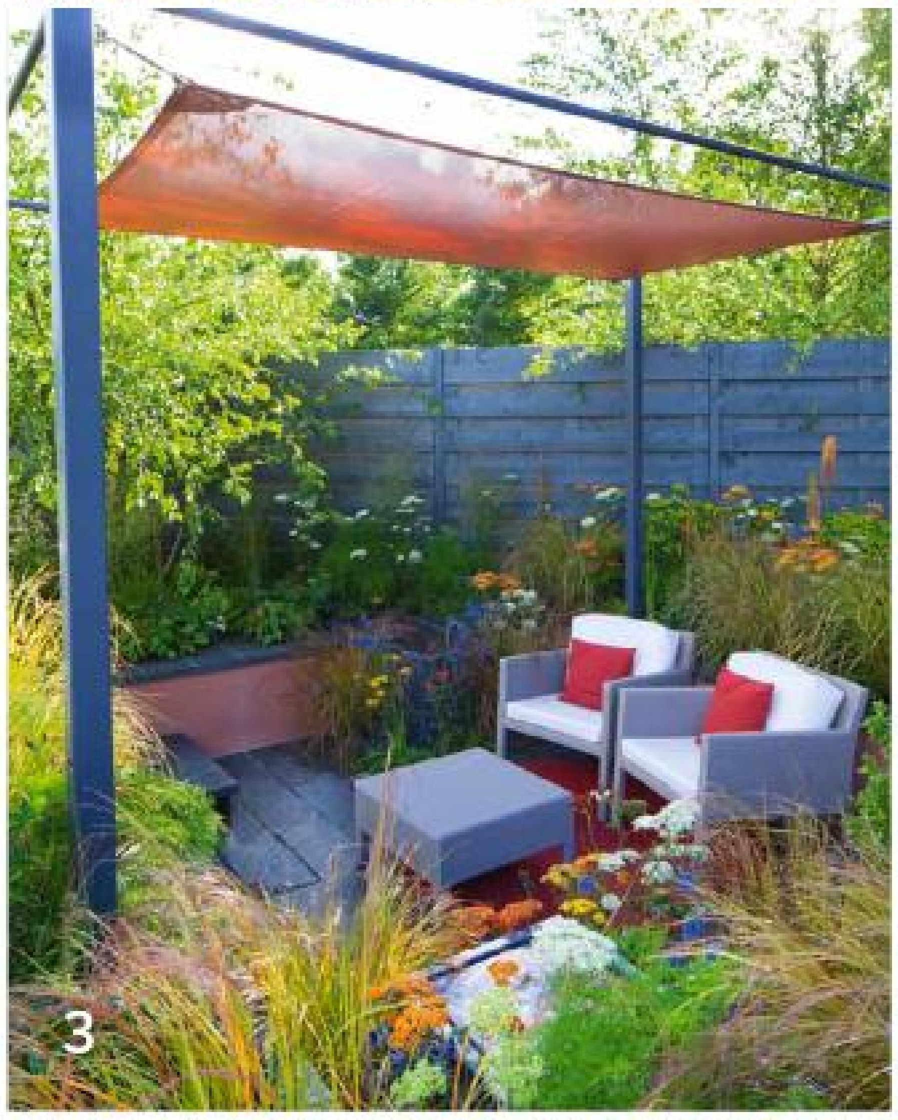
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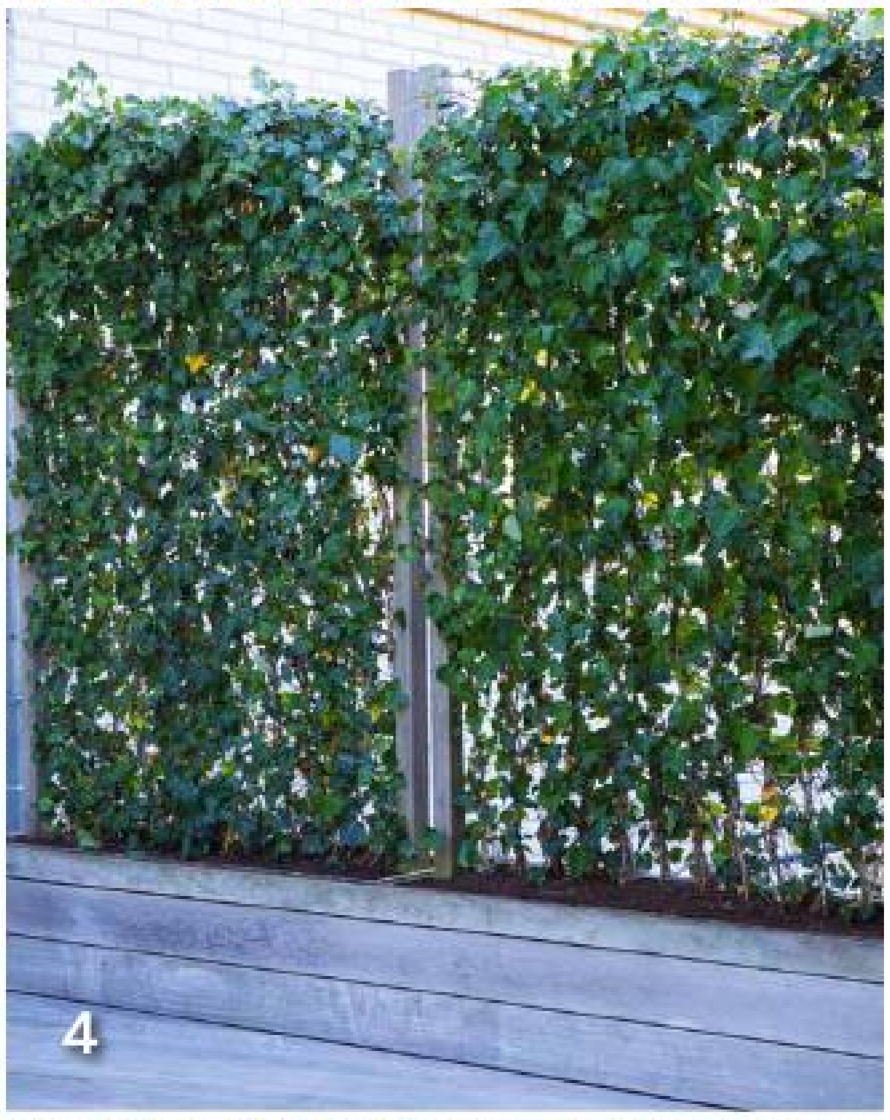
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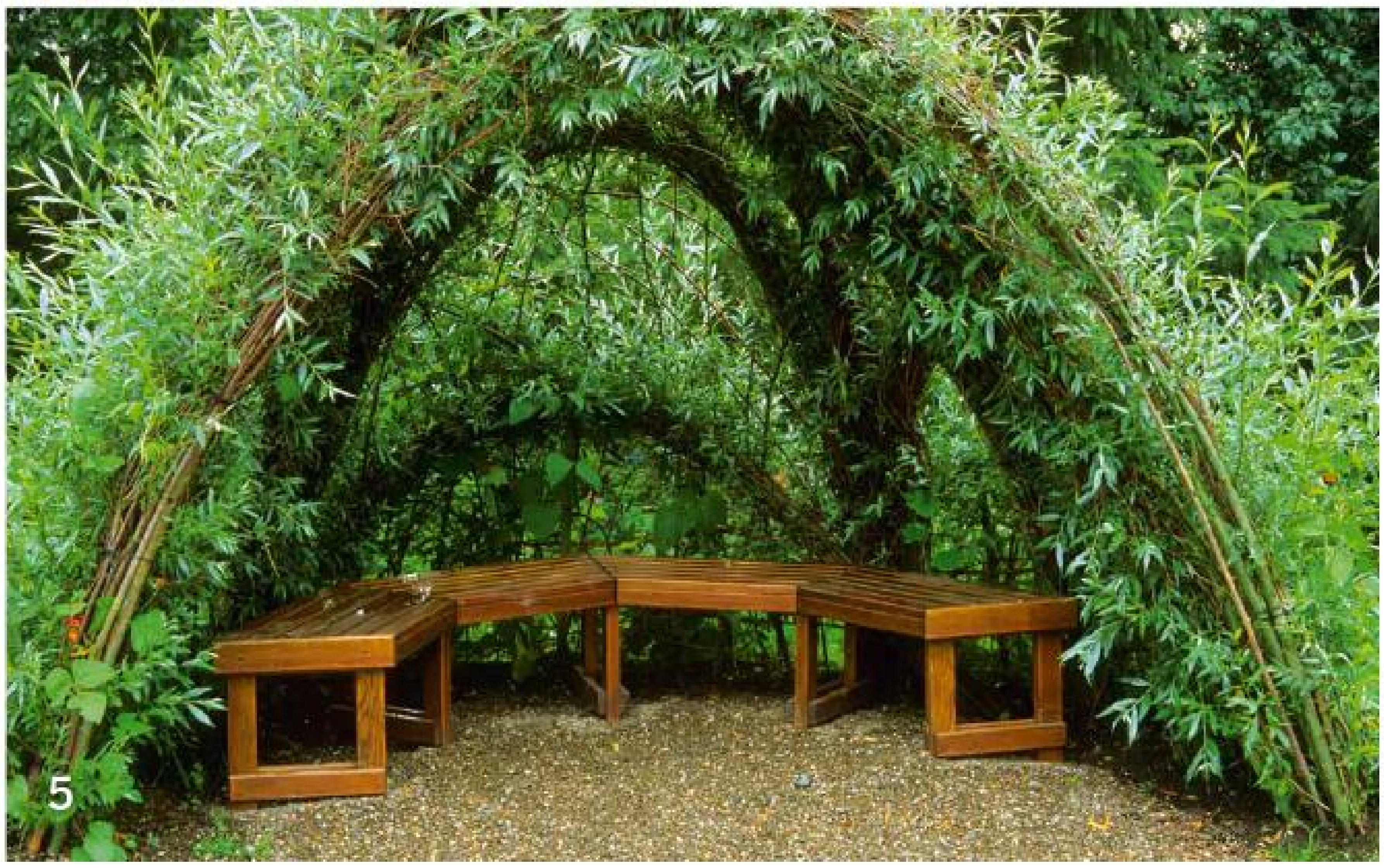
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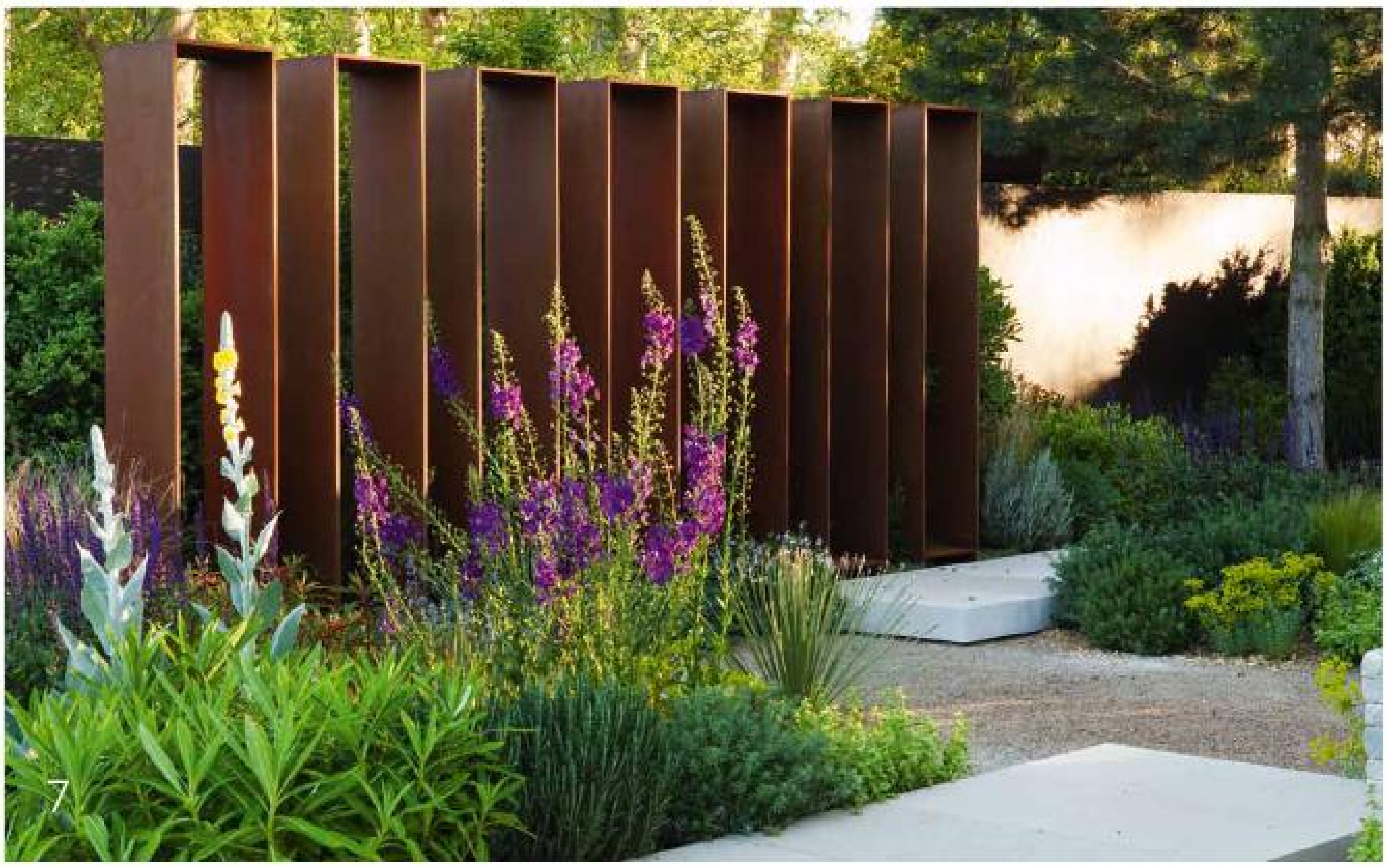
2-5 MARIANNE MAJERUS

6


7

6-7 MARIANNE MAJERUS

6 Fabulous foliage

A pergola or arbour planted with large-leaved climbers, such as this *Vitis coignetiae*, is great for providing privacy and excellent for dividing up spaces within a garden. To extend the coverage you can mix evergreen and deciduous climbers and add seasonal interest with flowering climbers, such as *Clematis*.

7 Off the wall

In recent years Corten steel has become a popular material for creating screens and boundaries. This stunning garden – which perfectly illustrates how an architectural element can also create privacy – was designed by Andy Sturgeon for the *The Telegraph* at the 2010 Chelsea Flower Show, winning best in show and a gold medal.

Boundary problems

If you have boundary problems and need to find advice then try these websites for further information:

www.boundary-problems.co.uk
www.gardenlaw.co.uk
www.planningportal.gov.uk

Well-behaved hedges

Avoid boundary problems by planting an interesting and 'well-behaved hedge' such as:

- *Choisya* 'Goldfingers'
- *Cotoneaster franchetii*
- *Edgeworthia chrysantha*
- *Hydrangea aspera* Villosa Group
- *Myrtus communis* AGM
- *Nandina domestica*
- *Olearia macrodonta* AGM
- *Osmanthus* × *burkwoodii*
- *Phillyrea angustifolia*
- *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Diabolo' AGM*
- *Pittosporum tobira* AGM
- *Sarcococca confusa* AGM

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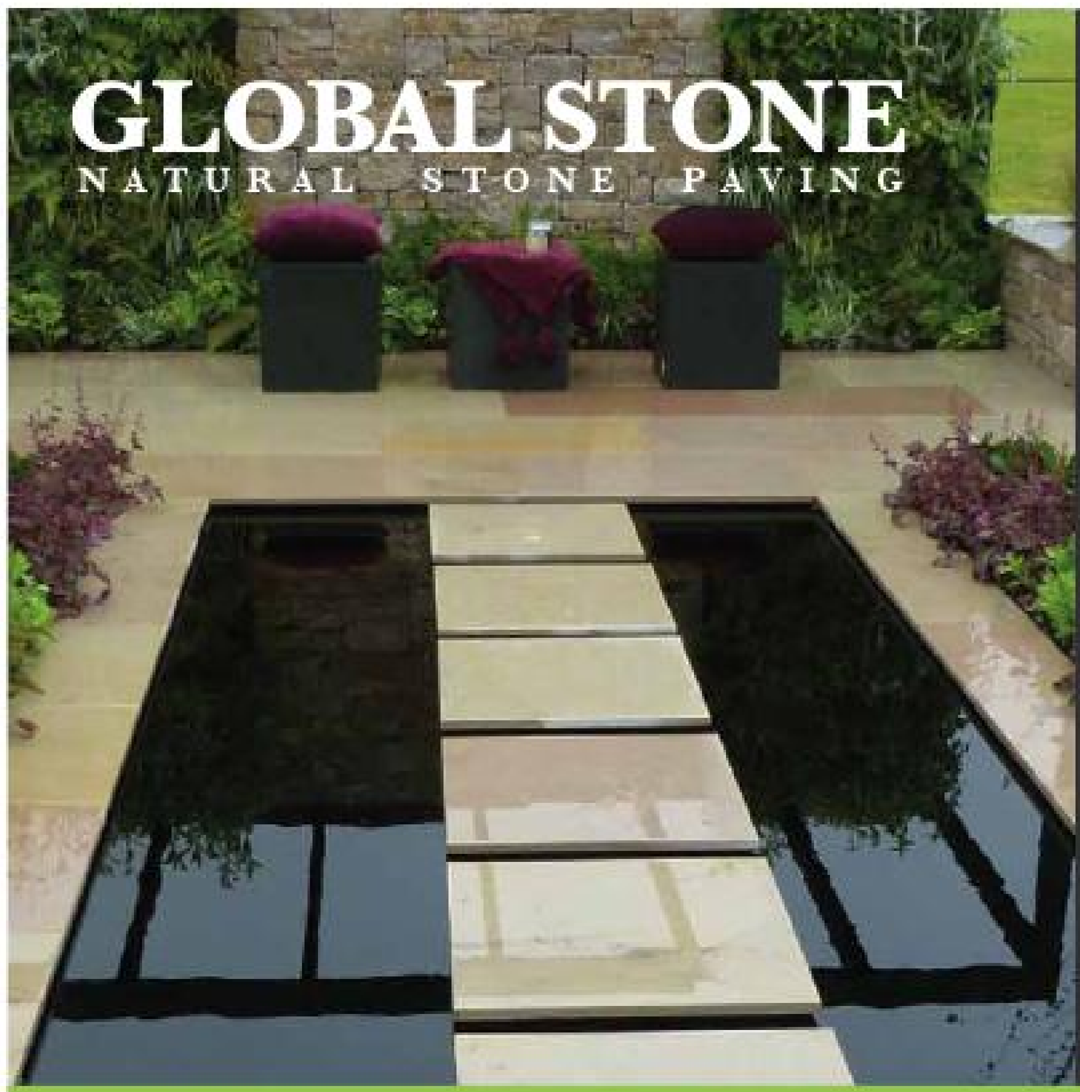

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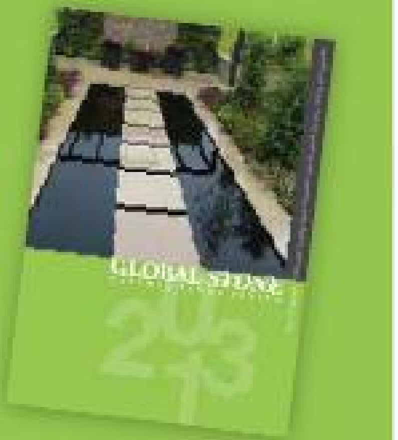

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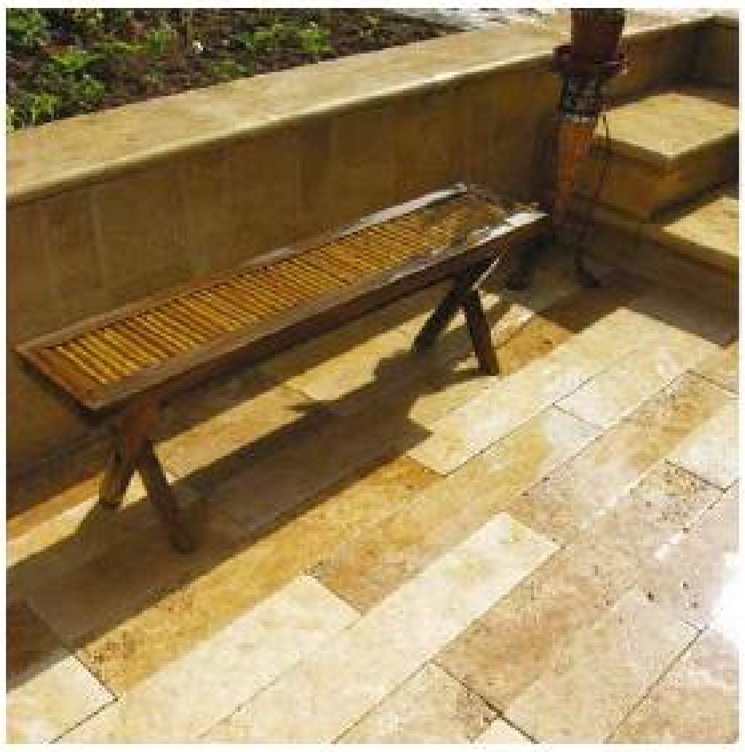

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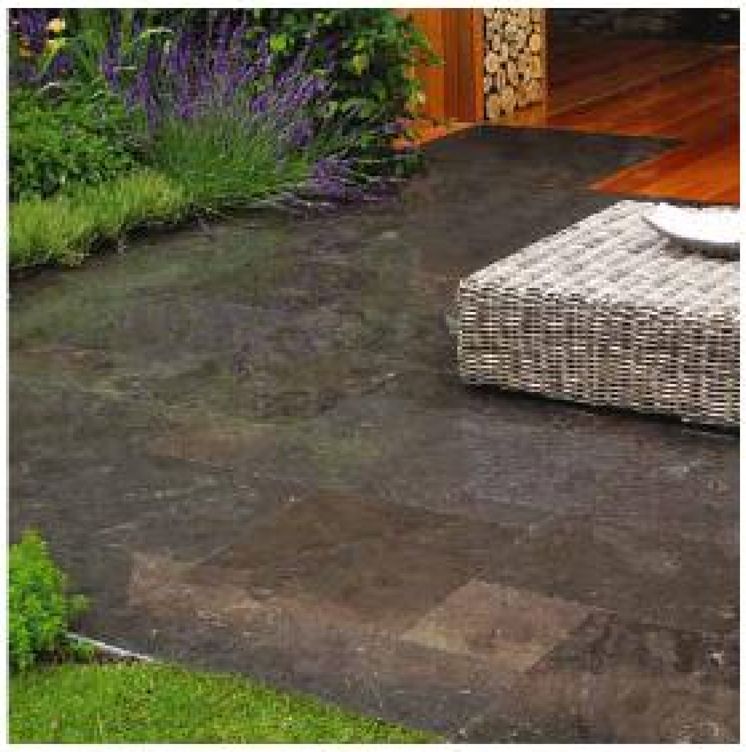

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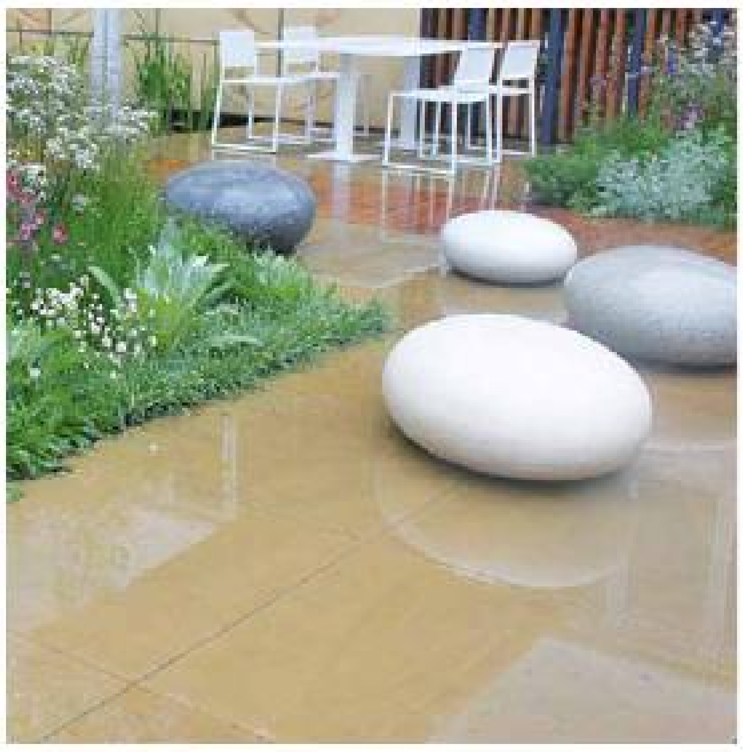
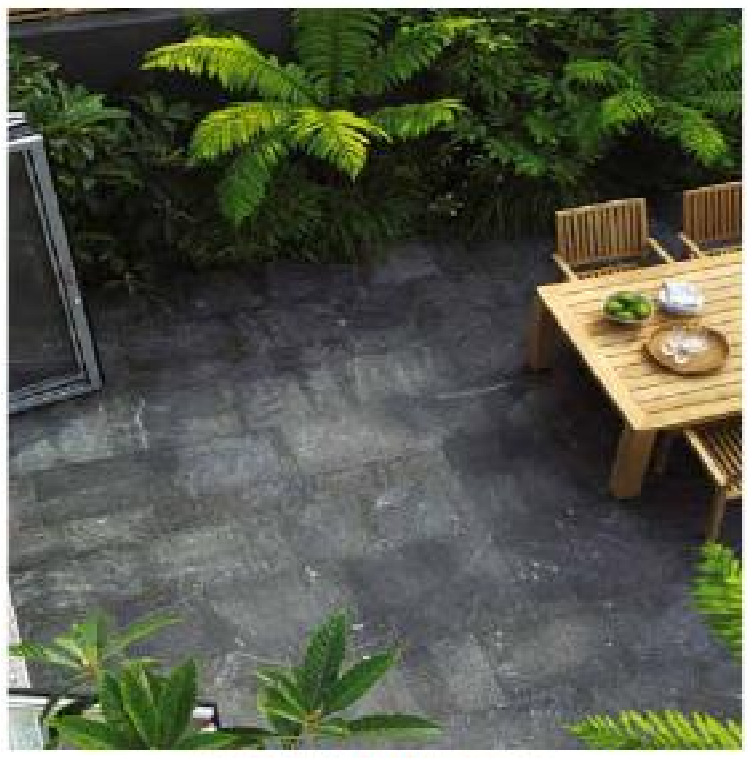


CHELSEA QUALITY

Sawn Yorkstone

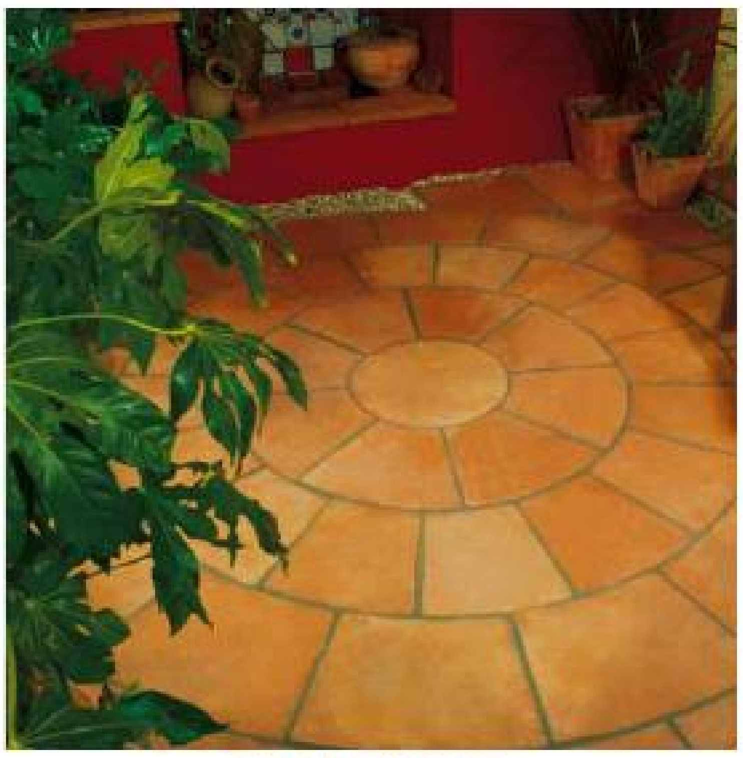
Made to order, seen at 2013 Chelsea Flower Show, CED Stone, 01708 867237, www.ced.ltd.uk



DARK AND HANDSOME

Equinox black quartzite

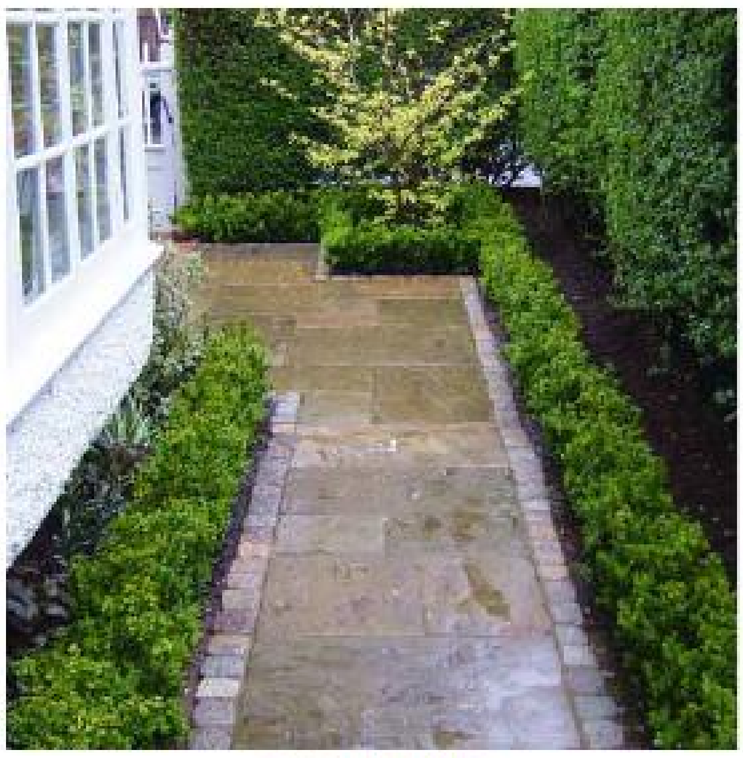
Stone Market, see website for stockists, 024 7651 8700, www.stonemarket.co.uk



SUPER CIRCLES

Old Provence Circle

Diameter 2.31m, £250, Westminster Stone, 01978 710685, www.westminsterstone.com



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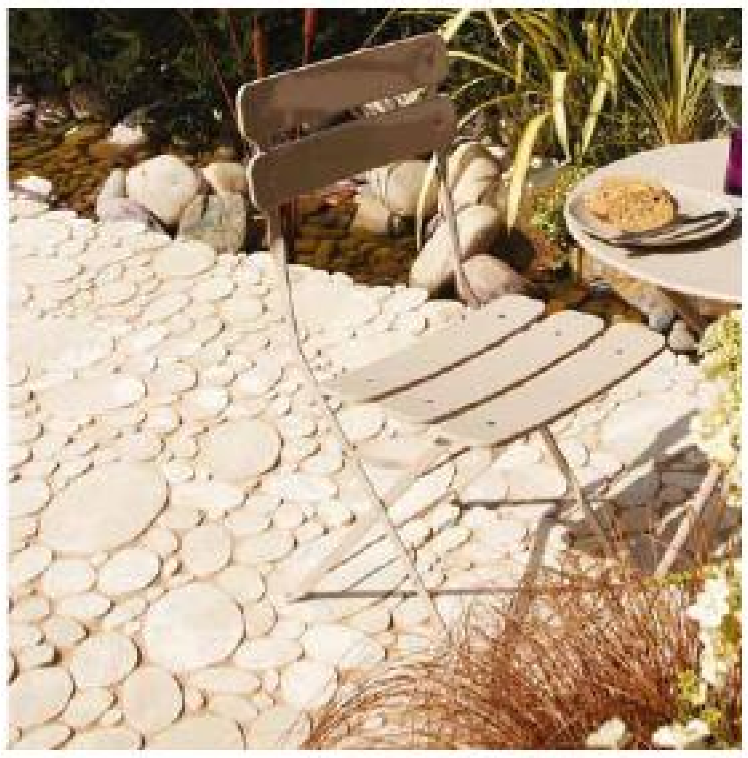
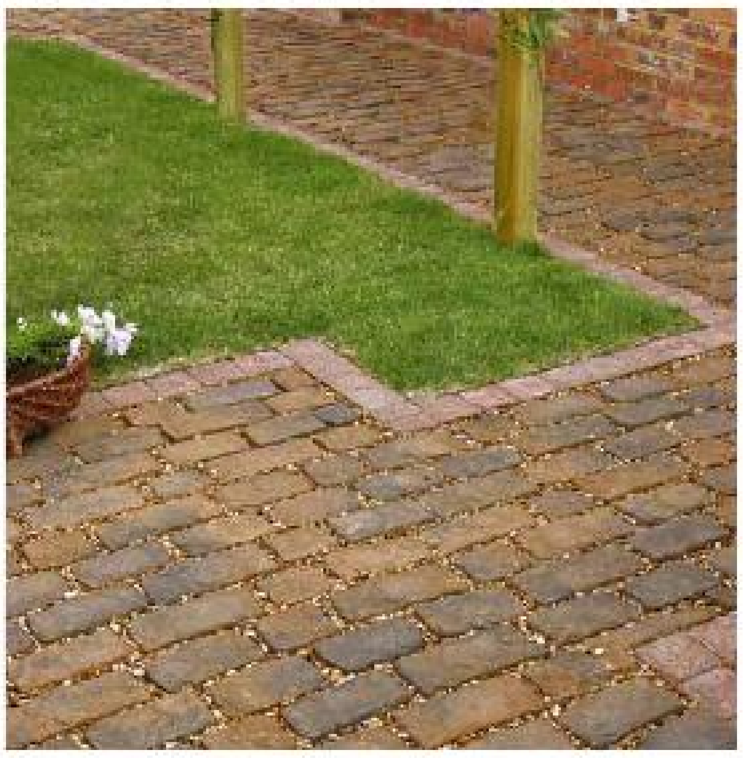
£87 per square metre, Stone Heritage, 01629 650647, www.yorkstoneheritage.co.uk



CONTEMPORARY STYLE

Old Town Chelsea Cobble

From £35-40 per square metre, Bradstone, 01335 372289, www.bradstone.com



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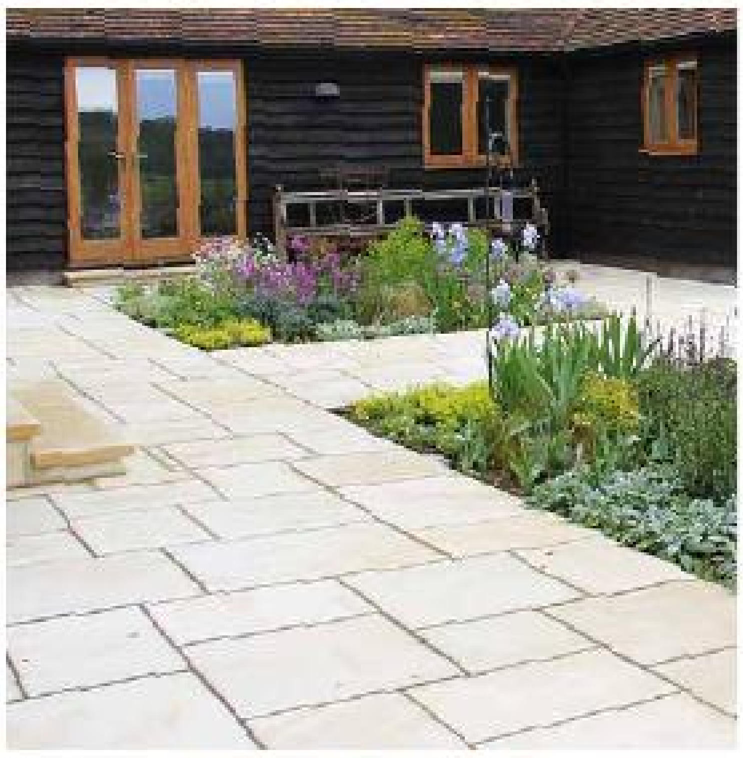

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Books, letters, crossword and reader offers

Lynn Parker and Kiri Ross-Jones's photographic history of Kew provides a fascinating insight into the gardens' past. See our review on page 97.

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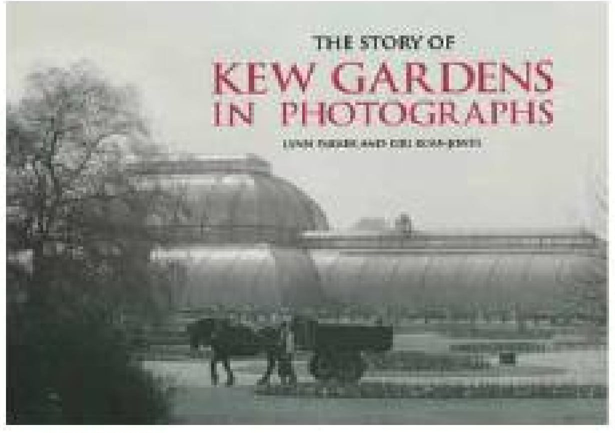
ILLUSTRATION BY HANNAH MCVICAR

Books

THE STORY OF KEW GARDENS IN PHOTOGRAPHS

by Lynn Parker and Kiri Ross-Jones

Arcturus, £14.99
ISBN 978-1782120599



THE STORY OF
KEW GARDENS
IN PHOTOGRAPHS
LYNN PARKER AND KIRI ROSS-JONES

Women at work in Kew's potting sheds during the Second World War.

Like any scrapbook, *The Story of Kew Gardens in Photographs* is a bit of a hotch-potch, but one that makes good use of the fact the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew were first opened to the public at around the same time as the birth of photography. Co-authors Lynn Parker, assistant curator of art and artefacts, and Kiri Ross-Jones, Kew's archivist, have drawn together every aspect of work and life associated with the gardens to create a book that is fascinating to dip into.

As you might expect, there are lots of pictures of gentlemen with magnificent whiskers, including William Hooker and his son Joseph, who consecutively ran the gardens from 1841 until 1885. But there is also a shot of a very youthful Alan Titchmarsh taken in 1970, collecting the Metcalf Cup, awarded to the Kew Diploma student with the best academic results in their second year.

There are fantastic pictures of the horse-drawn Tree Transplanter, which revolutionised the transplanting of mature trees in the later 19th century, a wasp-waisted Queen visiting the gardens in 1959, and the crumpled remains of a single-seater aircraft that crash landed on the lawns in 1928.

Other striking images show plant-hunting expeditions in far corners of the world; botanic gardens in former British colonies; women with bustles and men in top hats, joining hands to demonstrate the massive breadth of the giant redwoods in California; and Frank Kingdon-Ward leaning against a jeep and looking like Indiana Jones.

From men in aprons, ties and clogs to women in serious spectacles and white lab coats, the images show the changing face of Kew and chart its history. There is a shot of firemen in 1913 dousing the charred remains of the refreshment pavilion, burned down by suffragettes, a nervous-looking little girl perched on a giant waterlily leaf and a lovely image of botanical artist Ann Webster, atop a step ladder in 1951 sketching a particularly tall orchid.

Not a book to be read cover to cover, but a box of mixed delights to be dipped into and relished.

Jodie Jones is a freelance writer specialising in gardens.

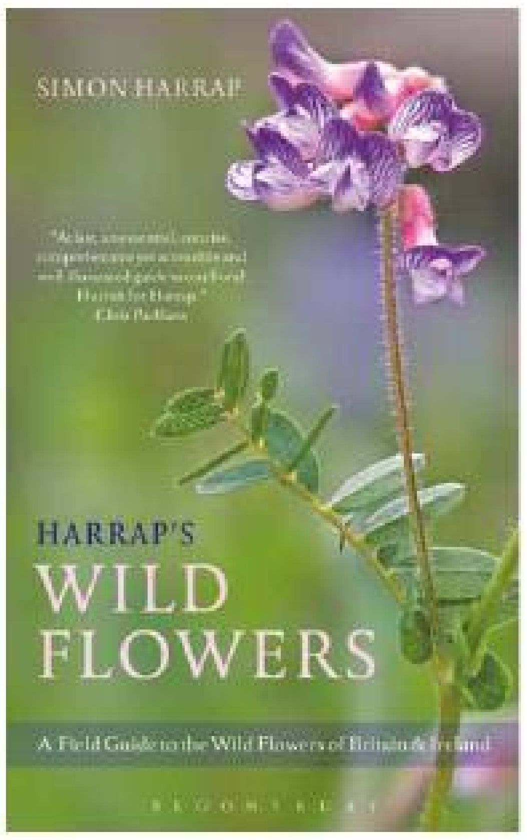
book offer

RRP £14.99. **Reader offer price £12.99** including p&p.

Books

HARRAP'S WILD FLOWERS

by Simon Harrap
Bloomsbury, £16.99
ISBN 978-1408113608



A recent survey revealed that only two out of every ten people questioned could identify an ash tree and that only half recognised an oak leaf. We have only 70 species of native tree but around 1,500 species of wild flower, so it seems likely that our national ability to name all but the commonest of those might be even worse. At a time when the public is being encouraged to participate in the protection of our flora we need easy-to-use, well-illustrated field guides; *Harrap's Wild Flowers* (which includes trees) is a fine addition to the genre.

Light enough to carry on a country walk, it combines astutely chosen descriptions with 2,000 clear photographs that include whole plants, flowers and a key identification feature for each species. It's also comprehensive; it includes 934 species, only excluding extreme rarities, grasses, ferns, club-mosses, horsetails and submerged aquatic plants. The up-to-date distribution maps, supplied by the Botanical Society of the British Isles, are valuable. Any reader who thinks, for example, they have discovered *Gentiana verna* in the Chilterns will discover their identification has gone astray and that *Gentianella germanica* is more likely. It's also a relief to find a combined index of common and Latin names; separate indices are an unnecessary encumbrance when you are constantly flicking between possible identifications and an index.

As the author admits: 'There is no short cut to flower identification – the ability to recognise several hundred species only comes with experience.' Any user feeling intimidated by this challenge can be reassured that this guide will help them ascend the learning curve with a photographic index of plant families and an illustrated glossary to help master the botanical jargon. The author has even added a few anecdotes; I wish I'd known monkshood toxins can be absorbed through skin before I planted it with bare hands in my garden.

Dr Phil Gates writes a country diary for The Guardian *and is former senior lecturer in botany at Durham University.*

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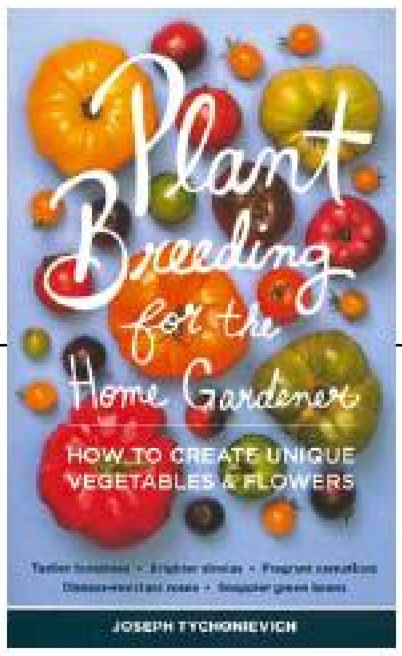
Plant Breeding for the Home Gardener
HOW TO CREATE UNIQUE VEGETABLES & FLOWERS
JOSEPH TYCHONIEVICH

PLANT BREEDING FOR THE HOME GARDENER

Joseph Tychonievich
Timber Press, £14.99
ISBN 978-1604693645

Most gardeners like to experiment, usually by challenging gardening practice with innovative sowing times or composting techniques, but few attempt to breed their own plants. This book by Joseph Tychonievich, who turned a childhood interest in plant breeding into a successful career, may be set to change that.

It is one book that can be judged by its cheerful, upbeat cover. Well presented and written in a chatty style, this accessible guide provides all the basic knowledge to ensure success, giving the reader courage to 'do it yourself' using examples of familiar vegetables and ornamentals from beans to zinnias.

In an attempt to simplify the science there is extensive use of analogy – a little too much at times, when scientific terms with a simple explanation would be more concise and provide greater clarity.

But it is an ideal book for beginners with a useful list of websites so readers can increase their knowledge and understanding, and is an ideal practical introduction for students taking GCSE Botany or Biology or anyone embarking on a career in horticulture.

Matthew Biggs is a regular panellist on BBC R4's Gardeners' Question Time.

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THE FLOWER OF EMPIRE

by Tatiana Holway
OUP, £18.99
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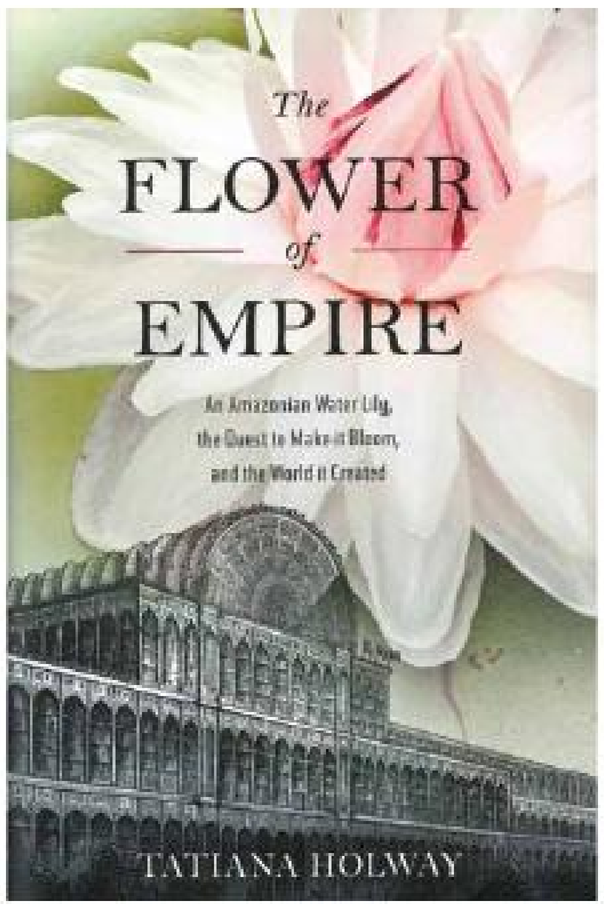

The
FLOWER
of
EMPIRE
An Amazonian Water Lily, the Quest to Make it Bloom, and the World it Created
TATIANA HOLWAY

In 1837 Robert Schomburgk, a German-born explorer who was surveying British Guiana for the Royal Geographic Society, came across something rather strange and wonderful. It was a giant waterlily with exquisitely fragrant flowers and huge round leaves, five to six feet in diameter. A decade later *Victoria amazonia*, as it is now known – originally it was named *Victoria regia*, in honour of Britain's newly crowned queen – arrived in Britain where it became the subject of fierce rivalry among Victorian gardeners and the inspiration for the structure of the Crystal Palace.

Author Tatiana Holway, an American academic and specialist in Victorian literature, uses the story of the plant's discovery – and the subsequent race to get it to flower – to weave an entertaining history of the people and institutions that shaped Victorian gardening.

Victoria regia arrived at a time of rapid innovation, when botany was becoming a passion for many, and explorers and plant collectors risked their lives to bring new flowers to these shores. It was also a time when, for the wealthy, no horticultural enterprise was deemed too extravagant. In 1830, for example, a purpose-built machine, and the muscle of 40 men, was employed for four days to move a 40-year-old weeping ash 26 miles from a nursery in Derby to Chatsworth House.

Joseph Paxton, the head gardener at Chatsworth and horticultural right-hand man to the 6th Duke of Devonshire, was the man responsible for transplanting that ash tree and he went on to play a pivotal role in the waterlily's story. Not only was he the first man to get the plant to flower but he also used its structure in his design for the Crystal Palace, the giant glasshouse that housed the Great Exhibition of 1851.

Although the book has a tendency to meander away from its main narrative, these detours help bring to life the horticultural giants, whose names are familiar today. One chapter looks at the botanist Sir Joseph Banks and charts the rise – and decline following his death – of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, under his directorship.

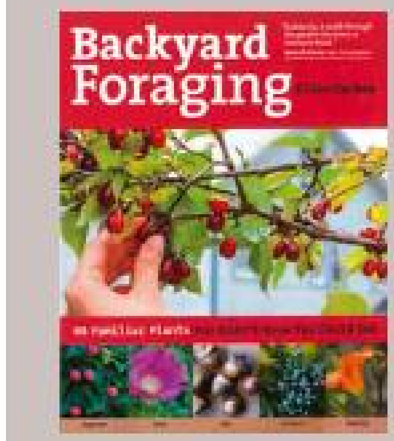
It's a read that should delight all lovers of garden history.

Sui Kee Searle is a freelance gardens writer and blogger.

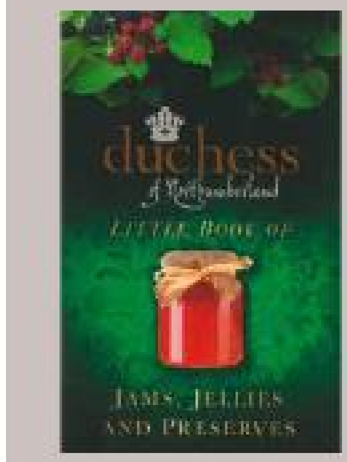
book offer

RRP £18.99. **Reader offer price £17.99** including p&p.

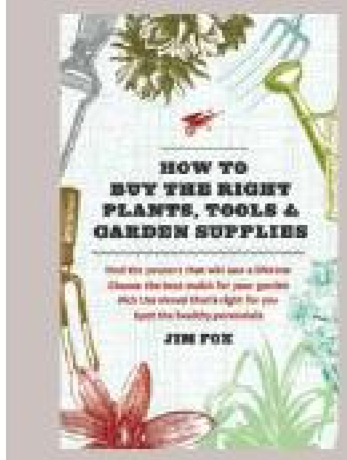
Other recently released books for gardeners



BACKYARD FORAGING
by Ellen Zachos
Storey Publishing, £11.99
ISBN 978-1612120096
A comprehensive guide to the edible plants found in gardens, lawns and parks.



LITTLE BOOK OF JAMS, JELLIES AND PRESERVES
by The Duchess of Northumberland
The History Press, £9.99
ISBN 978-0752494517
Traditional recipes from the kitchens of Alnwick Castle.



HOW TO BUY THE RIGHT PLANTS, TOOLS AND GARDEN SUPPLIES
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Timber Press, £9.99
ISBN 978-1604692143
Choose the healthiest plants, and keep them thriving.

THE PROFESSIONAL DESIGNER'S GUIDE TO GARDEN FURNISHINGS

THE PROFESSIONAL DESIGNER'S GUIDE TO GARDEN FURNISHINGS
by Vanessa Gardner Nagel
Timber Press, £25
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An insider's guide to keeping your garden looking stylish.

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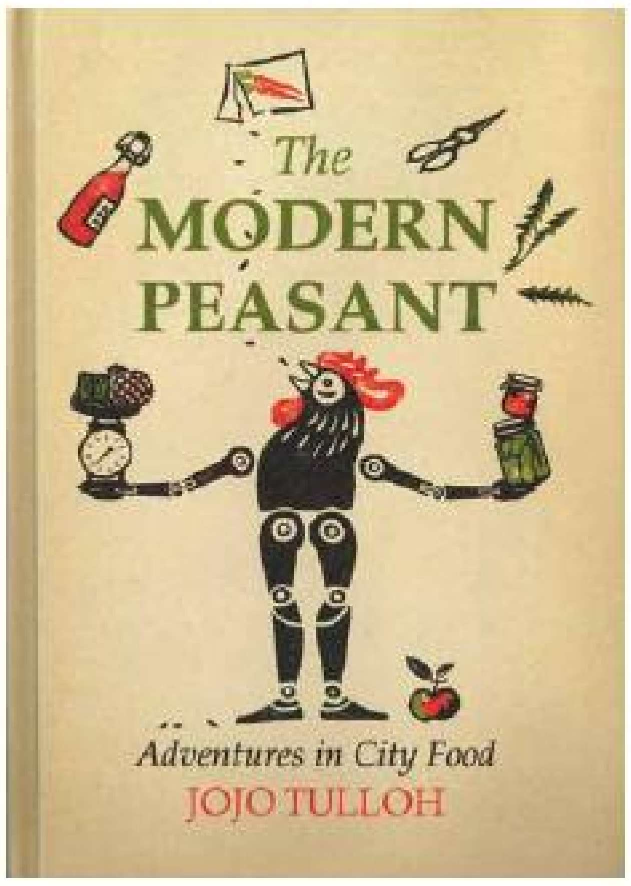
Books

THE MODERN PEASANT

by Jojo Tulloh
Chatto & Windus, £16.99
ISBN 978-0701186685



The first chapter had me. I fell into the parched landscape of Apulia, the smoky interior of Patience Gray's Italian kitchen and to memories of a book I'd quite forgotten. *Honey From A Weed* was written by Gray in the late eighties and charts her journey following her sculptor partner from Carrara, through to Spain, Greece and down to southern Italy, picking up the local cooking traditions on the way. The book remains a seminal work on peasant cooking.

If Jojo had stuck with Patience Gray for the next 300 pages, I would have been more than happy. She doesn't and although at the start I kept hankering for some more on Gray, I was quickly swept along with Tulloh's own journey into a sort of 'peasant-like self sufficiency for city dwellers'.

Tulloh is a food writer and allotment holder and although she sometimes dreams of life in the countryside, she lives in Hackney.

Like many of us stuck in the city she makes do and this book is her exploration of the food producers, beekeepers, cheese makers and butchers and the like that use traditional methods to make real food. She chases her peasant-lifestyle fantasies through the streets of London and very quickly you get swept along too.

For every moment where you might roll your eyes at the culinary pretension that is the London food scene – at one point she goes to a sound installation of a pig's life, described as 'something between a hoedown, a harvest supper and a rave' – a page later you're a little jealous you weren't there too, when she produces some wonderful, earthy recipe.

Each chapter, whether it's about baking bread, fermenting, smoking, tending bees or growing food, is littered with wonderful literary references from food historian Dorothy Hartley to urban gardener Novella Carpenter via the writer John Berger. This well-versed book is like a wonderful introduction to the best culinary library out there. I not only filled my notebook with ideas, but with the titles of books I must read.

For the gardener, Tulloh comes into her own by understanding that home-grown harvests can be erratic and often need adapting. The recipes are faultless, easy to produce and yet unusual. It's a must for any foodie; my copy is already stained with mud and olive oil, which must be a good sign.

Alys Fowler is a Kew-trained gardener author and TV presenter.

book offer

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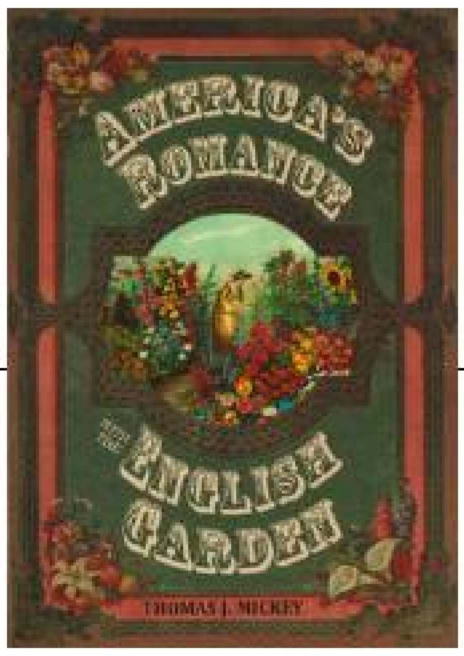


AMERICA'S ROMANCE WITH THE ENGLISH GARDEN

by Thomas J Mickey
Ohio University Press, £24.95
ISBN 978-0821420355

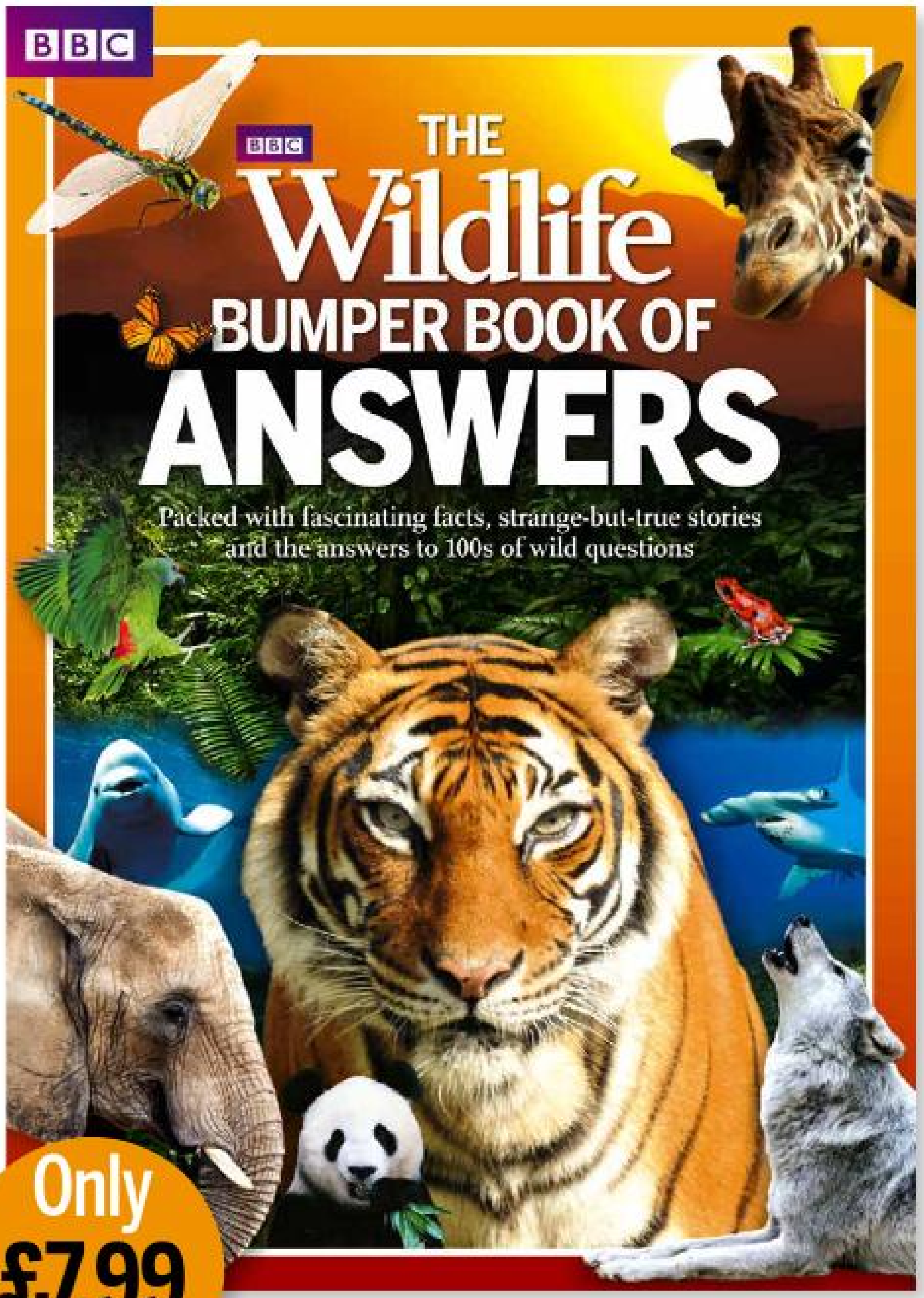
American gardeners have a strangely ambiguous attitude towards British plants and gardens. Creating herbaceous borders backed by adobe walls in Santa Fe, New Mexico, seems to reveal an excessive devotion to the English style, while many American gardeners are justifiably sceptical of books on plants and gardens originating in the UK.

This book examines the influence of English garden style as it swept America in the late 19th century. The author highlights the development of a cheap and reliable postal service as the means not only for distributing seeds and plants to a predominantly rural population, but also for distributing ideas through the mail-order catalogues with their often exquisite coloured engravings.

For the first time colourful styles were cheaply, widely and enticingly popularised and many of these ideas originated in England. Focusing on the entrepreneurial individuals who promoted English gardening in America in the 19th century, this is an illuminating book packed with the very readable results of dedicated and thoughtful research. It helps give a greater understanding of how and why English garden style has been admired in North America for such a long time.

Graham Rice is a garden writer and photographer.

THE BBC WILDLIFE BUMPER BOOK OF ANSWERS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Letters

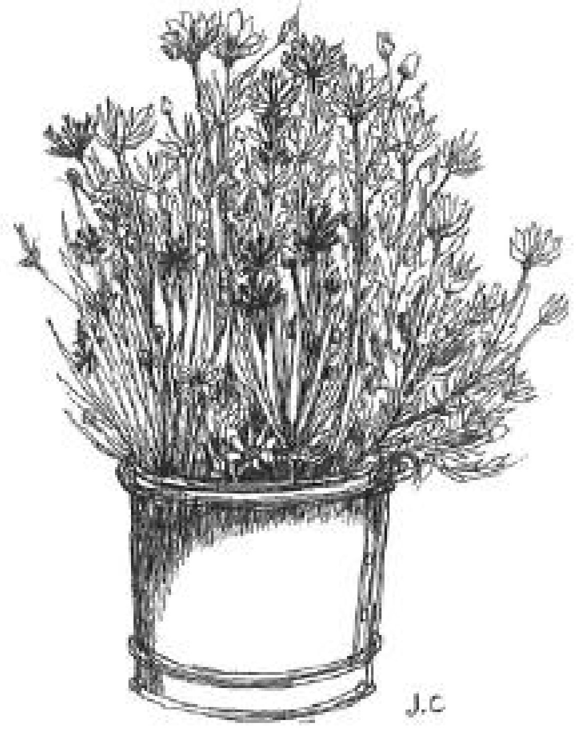
Have your say – we'd like to hear your views, so please write to us at: GARDENS ILLUSTRATED, 9th Floor, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN, or email letters@gardensillustrated.com

Star letter

New rust bucket

Glancing through Julia Wylie's article [issue 199, page 38], a rusting corrugated-iron plant container caught my eye and prompted my memory: somewhere deep in the woodstore was a calf feeder. A short search revealed the galvanised clunking bucket, and I looked around for suitable plants. An argyranthemum, grey leaved with white daisies, picked up colour from the bucket, while two pots of orange tagetes, bought in a plant sale for £1, enlivened the whole and proved the right combination of cool and warm colour. Now placed on an old Edwardian chair (rusting ironwork; lichen-covered seat) it has the 'look', but then in this old cottage garden by the sea, it's a look that comes naturally...

Joan Cockett, Cornwall



PROFILE

Gardeners' world

I so much enjoyed your profile of Lynden B Miller [issue 199, page 62]. Please keep going with these international profiles, it widens our knowledge and thinking, opens up our minds and we can only be enriched by the exchange of ideas. I would love to read about plant nurseries in different countries, such as Thailand with its royal palace gardens or Indonesia and its beautiful garden sculptures. We can learn so much about garden thinking, and how these growers, gardeners and designers contend with their own landscape, climate and resources.

Ariana Grimes, by email

ED'S REPLY: Entirely agree. Our January issues tend to have the greatest international focus.

DESIGN INSPIRATION

Small niggle

Gardening, as I do, on a small (12m x 14m) plot. I looked forward to your August issue, but was disappointed with the gardens selected for the small garden feature. If you had to use professionally designed gardens why not something a little more contemporary? I would have liked to have seen some work by people such as Paul Cooper, something to make me think and challenge convention. Gardening may be a traditional art form but it also has its cutting edge. When an opportunity, such as the small gardens feature, does arise could you show at least one good modern garden?

Bob Sawyer, by email

ED'S REPLY: Sorry to hear our selection of small gardens wasn't to your taste, but we try to include a range of style ideas for as many readers as possible to take away.

CULTURE CLASH

War of the words

Most of the time I don't realize (or should I say realise) I'm reading a British gardening magazine. My brain glosses over gray vs grey, color vs colour. But I had a laugh over Frank Ronan's *The Couch War* [issue 199, page 122]. We too have couch wars, but they involve making an effort to get off the sofa! Our weed of choice would probably be crabgrass.

Karen Twisler, New Jersey, USA

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TALKING POINT

Alys Fowler argues there should be no place in the garden shed for insecticides

Alys Fowler is a Kew-trained gardener, author and television presenter and keen kitchen gardener.

By November 2013, you will need by law in the UK to have safely disposed of any product containing imidacloprid – one of the neonicotinoids implicated in pollinator decline. Already pesticide manufacturers are hurriedly reformulating their products so they can sit within the ban, claiming new formulas have a 'good profile for bees'. But can insecticides contribute to a world good for pollinators? A good profile for a bee may not be the same for a moth or a hoverfly or the insect-feeding birds that dine on them. These products do not have to be tested across the spectrum of wild pollinators, so there is a great deal of uncertainty around the effects.

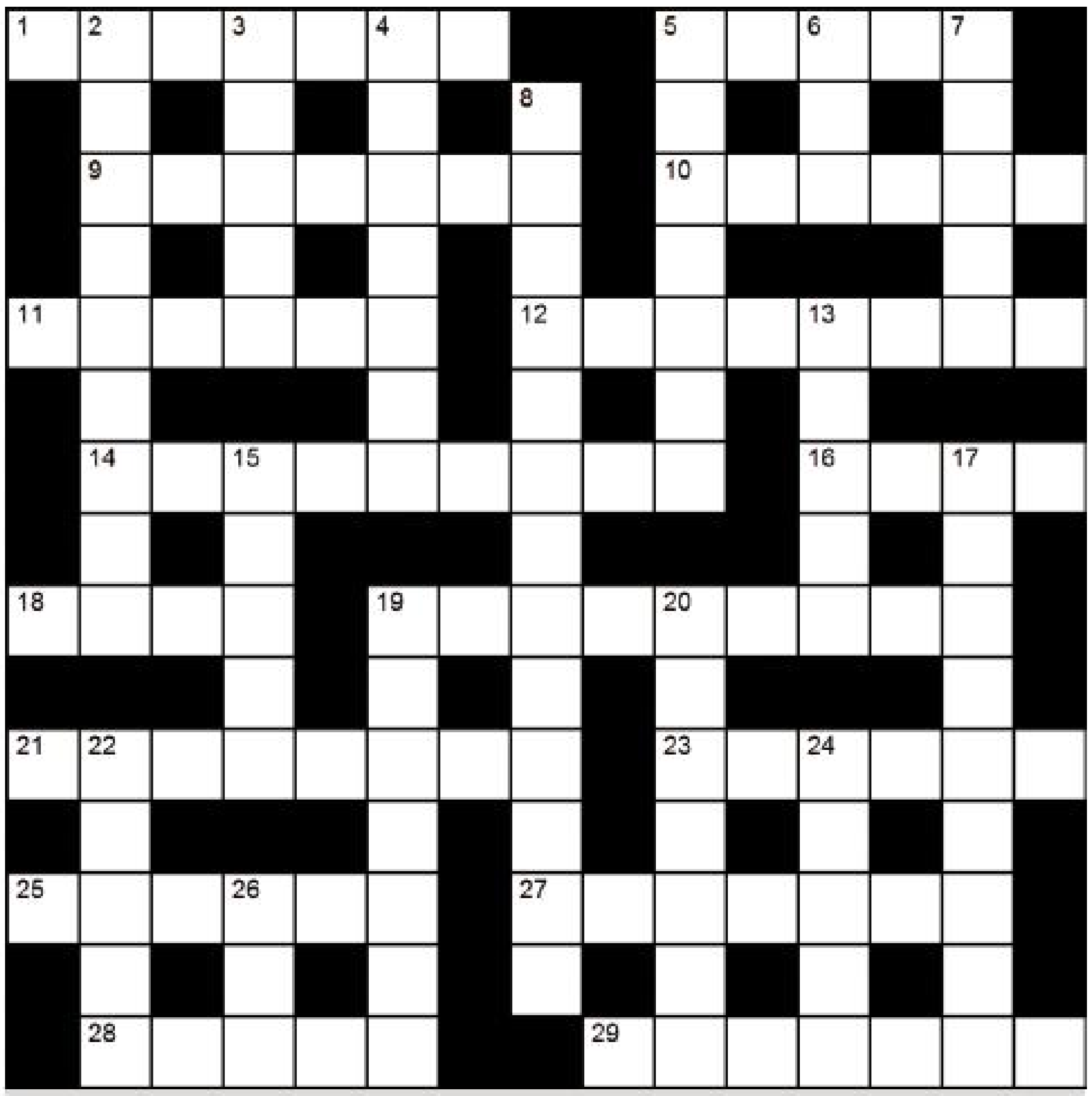
Unlike industrial farmers, gardeners have the luxury to tackle insect problems using genuinely sustainable solutions: biological controls or predators. There are no hidden surprises here: frogs eat vine weevil, blue tits eats aphids... it really can be that simple.

- For a list of products containing neonicotinoids visit www.bees.pan-uk.org

- What's your view? Write to us by post or email (details above).

We reserve the right to edit letters.

Crossword



ACROSS

1 'False indigo', genus of plants in pea family – causes OAP harm? (7)

5 Photos of antirrhinum? (5)

9 Protection – hers let out (7)

10 Taro-like root vegetables: do put in seed mixture (6)

11 Chinese artichoke, according to the French, right inside twisted cones (6)

12 A major plant pest – why I left, perhaps? (8)

14 Coniferous tree northerners yearn after (5,4)

16 Part of clematis leaf, Capri, say? (4)

18 In grass, Sissinghurst, is an area identified as needing protection (4)

19 Sort of matting used in watering eg greenhouse plants (9)

21 Device for scattering wild red pears (8)

23 A bi-coloured dahlia made from rattan! (6)

25 A fungicide I removed from skipper (6)

27 A tree ad, possibly: "like a spiked lawn" (7)

28 Reedmace genus, top of yucca in path, damaged (5)

29 Border plant – "Songbird" held by US spy agency (7)

DOWN

2 Common name for *Portulaca grandiflora* flowers Moses and Ross mixed up (4,5)

3 Marsh plants finally wither scattering seed (5)

4 Small sort of heated greenhouses – and stolen cots? (7)

5 Unproductive, but germ-free? (7)

6 Also part of Heligan dahlia (3)

7 That of the Titan arum is foul! (5)

8 *Fritillaria* plant that might could go to Her Majesty's head? (5,8)

13 Heath genus I put in *Acer* variety (5)

15 Fruit valued for its oil needs nothing to survive (5)

17 Fast-growing conifers – ideally in wild! (9)

19 The quince genus no acid spoilt around end of May (7)

20 Like growth of side shoots, partly flat, er, alternately (7)

22 Flower or shrub factory? (5)

24 Root turning right – it turns round! (5)

26 Hint: it's the best bit of asparagus (3)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

AUGUST'S SOLUTIONS

ACROSS: 1 Balsam **5** Solidago **9** Creeper **10** Ingram **11** Karl **12** Truss **13** Vine **14** Nandinas **16** Thrive **17** Spores **19** Watering **22** Rheum **23** Kent **25** Vigour **26** Incised **28** Mimulus **29** Sapele.

DOWN: 2 Alcea **3** Shelled **4/21** Mophead **5** Sprouts **6** Leics **7** Dig over **8** Glasnevin **12** Tends **15** Asplenium **16** Totem **18** Red worm **19** Weevils **20** Rakes up **22** Rural **24** Nodal **27** Cos.

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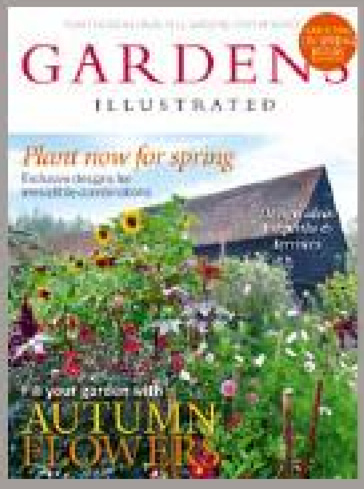

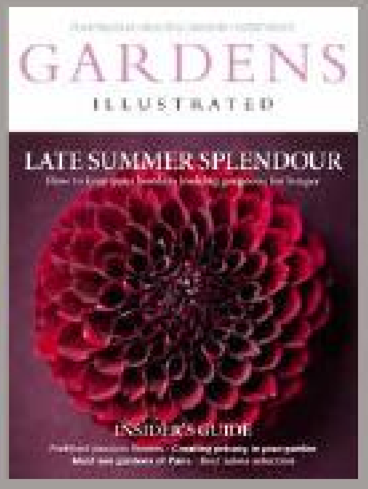

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Late summer gardens

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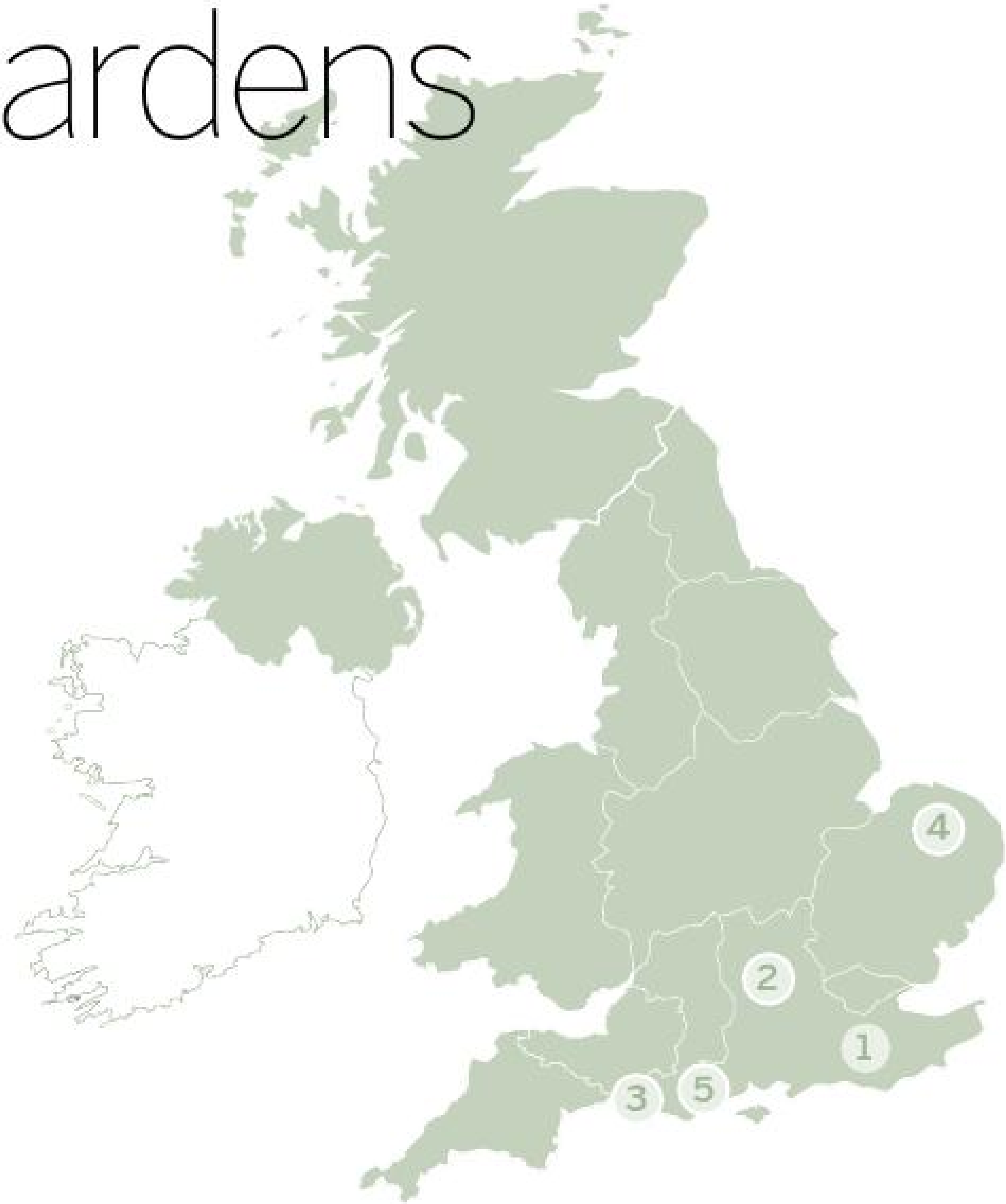

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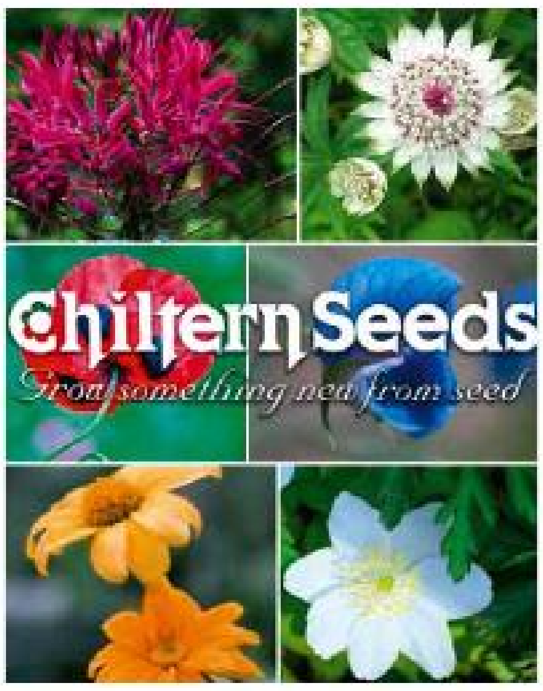

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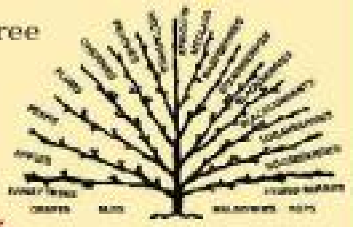

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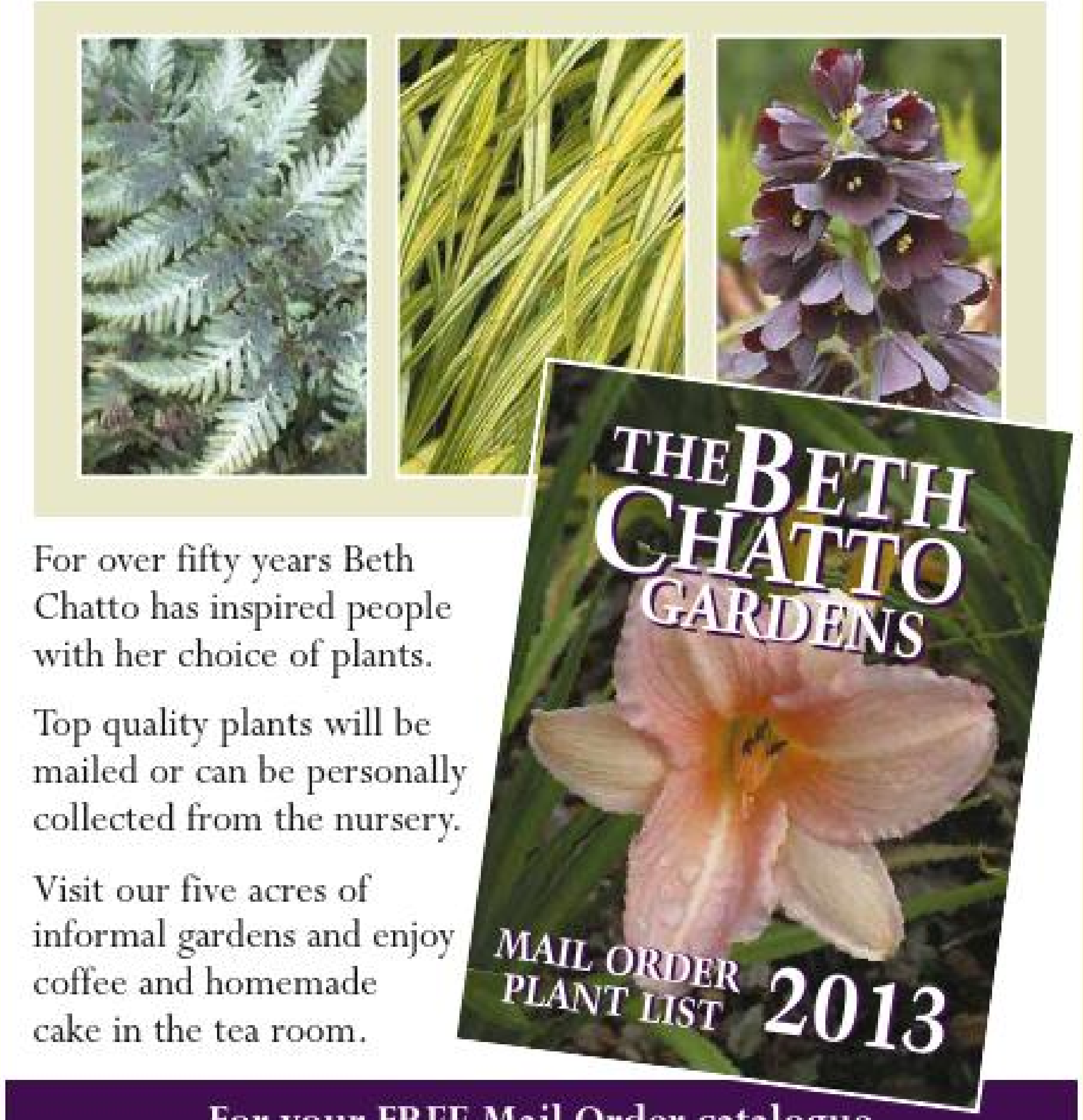

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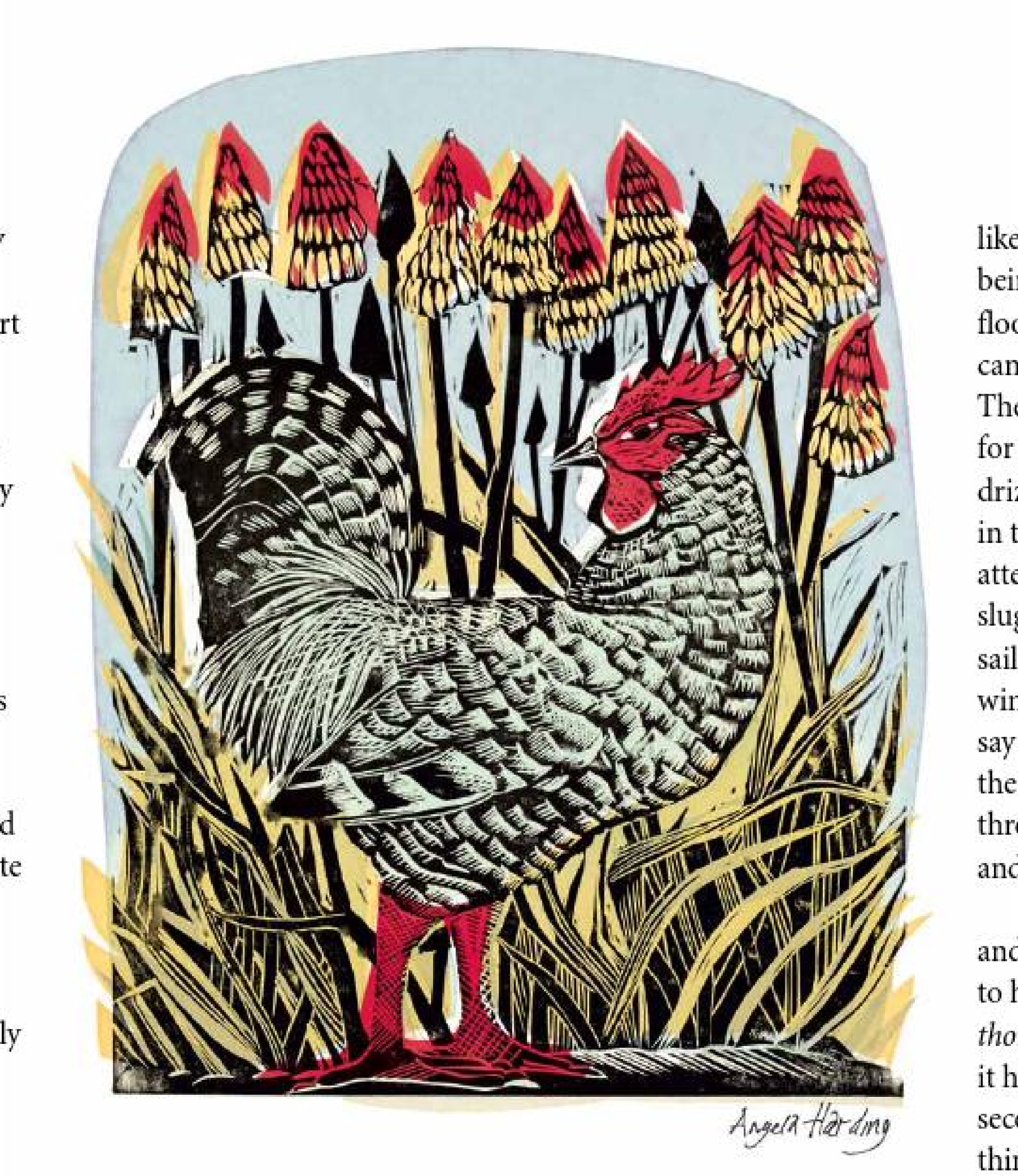
SIBYLLE PIETREK

Radical thinking

Our columnist has had a change of mind about some fiery usurpers

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **ANGELA HARDING**



In late summer, a little vulgarity can be overlooked. You can tolerate a drunk at the end of the party

It took a while to get my head around a red hot poker. Some people start out in life as radicals and become conservative with age. I have had the opposite trajectory: born an old fogey and finding myself more tolerant with experience. In my hidebound youth, in a backward corner of an ultramontane island, pokers were too alien to be liked. Other African migrants – geraniums and galtonias and busy lizzies – could ingratiate themselves somehow, but *Kniphofia* had an offensive way about it; a flaming insult to all that was allegedly demure and modest in an Irish garden.

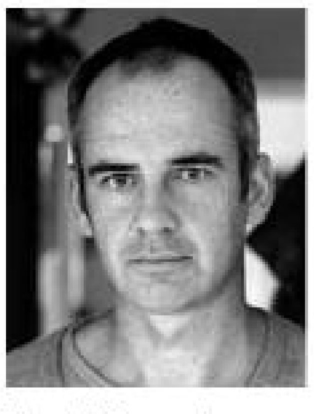
An echo of that feeling recrudesces every spring when I see a particular clump of pokers that loiters on a roadside corner not far from here. It is one of those early varieties, of the kind you see in flimsy catalogues. There is something grating about that combination of red and yellow and more so on the same flower head. And if their inherent crudity were not enough, they should not be screaming their alarm call in a gently wakening hedgerow, among primroses and stitchwort. It is liable to prejudice you against the entire genus.

Luckily, somewhere along the way, I met a few nice ones and began to realise that you shouldn't condemn a whole race for the excesses of the worst examples. It might have been 'Lord Roberts' that first turned my head, being a poker of subtle colouring: a very matt dark orange and solidly consistent from tip to bottom. Out of that breakthrough my eyes were opened to *K. uvaria* 'Nobilis', the giant, bright orange, pokeriest poker I know. From there I could look at any poker and like it on merit. After that it was only a question of finding room for them all.

Now I don't know what I would do without them. In late summer and early autumn they lift the borders like a middle-aged person being dragged to the dance floor and discovering that he can enjoy himself after all. They are as good as dahlias for shining through the drizzle, and better than dahlias in that they require no attention. Not a stake nor a slug pellet, and they come sailing through the wettest winter even though the books say that they shouldn't. You cut the old leaves off as you go through the border in spring and they do the rest themselves.

Not all my pokers are brash and thrusting. I am flattered to have *K. thomsonii* var. *thomsonii* survive, though it has yet to grace me with a second spike. It is a delicate thing, with flowers more like the aloe cousins than the poker brothers. It would not cause a scene in the most genteel Irish garden and if I ever saw it as a child I wouldn't have known it for a poker. Neither would *K. caulescens* immediately strike you as being a poker, when not in flower. The glaucous leaves emerge separately from a sturdy stem, making it a first-rate foliage plant. The flowers, I regret to say, are pokery in the worst sense, and I am obliged to turn a blind eye when they appear. But at least they have the grace to appear in late summer, when a little vulgarity can be overlooked. You can tolerate a drunk at the end of the party, but never at the beginning.

At the very end, in the bitter dregs, sometimes too late, comes *K. linearifolia*. In itself, it is a good poker; nothing remarkable. The leaves are fresh, the flowers are orange, the size is somewhere in the mid range. But it is always the last thing in the garden to flower, and just when you have given up on everything and forgotten that it was there, it will startlingly erupt, defying the detritus and the sorry frosted heads of dahlias around it to raise one last hurrah. If you are going to end the season with anything, what better than a bright orange exclamation mark? ☐


Frank Ronan is a novelist who lives and gardens in Worcestershire

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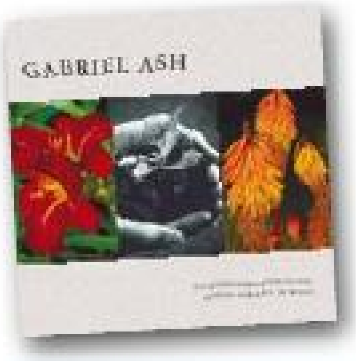

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